



# **NURSES AND MIDWIVES IN ACTION DURING EMERGENCIES AND DISASTERS**

Case Studies from the Western Pacific Region



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# FOREWORD

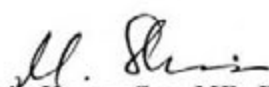
Natural disasters—such as earthquakes, tsunamis, cyclones, floods, landslides and droughts—disproportionately affect the Western Pacific Region, causing devastation and destruction to communities, health infrastructure and health systems. Countries must strengthen disaster mitigation, prevention, response and recovery systems, including training for nurses and other health-care professionals.

*Nurses and Midwives in Action during Emergencies and Disasters: Case Studies from the Western Pacific Region* emphasizes the critical leadership role of nurses and midwives in preparing for and during times of health threats, emergencies and disasters.


Nurses and midwives contribute significantly to successful disaster response by engaging and partnering with local leaders, communities and schools, and communicating, collaborating and coordinating with other health workers. Adaptability, creativity, innovation, critical thinking, learning collaboratively and competency in public health and infection control are characteristics of nurses and midwives that are essential to disaster management.

Professional development and partnerships with other disciplines that integrate critical nursing and midwifery roles will strengthen capacities and empower these health professionals to lead the humanitarian response to disasters. More research is needed to evaluate the outcomes and impacts of disaster-related nursing and midwifery interventions. The Asia Pacific Emergency and Disaster Nursing Network supports communities in disaster prevention, mitigation, response and recovery efforts.

We hope these case studies will be instructive for health professionals at all levels. The lessons learnt in these case studies should foster more integrated disaster responses, with nurses and midwives advocating and leading the effort to improve the health and well-being of individuals, families and communities.



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# PREFACE

Nurses and midwives play an important role in preparing and attending to communities in times of emergencies and disasters. With the current threat brought about by climate change and the consequences of global economic challenges, communities need the support of competent nurses to be ready for any event and to recover quickly. Emergency and disaster situations call for nurses to respond with confidence and good intentions. Their assessment skills need to be rapid, discriminating, accurate and continuous given the different levels of presenting situations, their innate nurturing capability to respond to fear and anxiety is needed by families.

The Asia Pacific Emergency and Disaster Nursing Network (APEDNN) was formed in 2007 during the Joint Asia Pacific Informal Meeting of Health Emergency Partners and Nursing Stakeholders in Bangkok, Thailand to create opportunities for strengthening coordination and collaboration, furthering capacity building and the integration of nursing personnel more fully into disaster preparedness and response teams and activities. It was initially composed of 72 participants from 17 countries of the Asia Pacific region. Since 2007, more APEDNN members have come together every year to support each other in terms of building capacities and sharing best practices in emergency and disaster preparedness, response, recovery and rehabilitation.

This publication, written by members of APEDNN, documents the role of nurses and midwives in emergency and disaster management. In the featured case studies, different countries experienced different challenges and offered valuable lessons and insights on how nurses play a crucial role in health emergency management. The stories demonstrated readiness, willingness and courage to guide families and communities to have hope and work for a new beginning.

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