

ABSTRACT

When disasters occur, hospitals are among the most important institutions as they are viewed as sanctuaries where victims seek solace. This study explored emergency and disaster preparedness at Onandjokwe Lutheran Hospital in Northern Namibia. The focus was on the policies governing emergency and disaster preparedness at Onandjokwe Lutheran Hospital, the Onandjokwe Lutheran Hospital emergency and disaster preparedness plan and the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of healthcare workers regarding emergency and disaster preparedness.

The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Data collection was through a self-administered questionnaire, semi-structured key informant interviews and a hospital disaster plan checklist. The study involved all the healthcare workers at Onandjokwe Lutheran Hospital and respondents were stratified according to occupation or current position held at the hospital, and then conveniently selected based on those who were available on the day that the questionnaires were administered. The response rate was 75%.

The results showed that Onandjokwe Lutheran Hospital was moving in the right direction in terms of preparing for emergencies and disasters though it was still in the early stages. The efforts made by the disaster committee of the hospital towards emergency and disaster preparedness were commendable. At the time, the hospital was working on its disaster plan, which was at the draft stage and covered the major components that should be included in a plan. The hospital had a shortage of staff. The majority of the staff members (62.7%) perceived their knowledge on managing mass casualty incidents to be fair to poor. Most of the staff members had a positive attitude towards emergency preparedness, and 95.6% of them would be willing to be called for duty during a mass casualty incident while only 54.9% were willing to work during an infectious disease outbreak. Emergency and disaster preparedness was governed by the disaster risk management policy of 2009, the National Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (NHEPRP) of 2003 and the Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan of 2009.