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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Health care services for flood victims

Dear Editor,

The recent report on health care services for flood victims is very interesting.¹ Buajaroen¹ concluded that "the outcomes of Health Care Service at the Flood Relief Operations Center were direct and sincere help without conditions, administrations concerned and volunteer nursing students instructors, University Officer have sympathetic and charitable with flood victims and environment." The devastating 2011 flood in Thailand is a good example of a natural disaster affecting millions of people. The positive media coverage of the disaster relief highlighted the emergency interdisciplinary teams' efforts to aid flood victims, and transport food and water. Similar to other countries, disaster relief in Thailand utilises a combination of civilian and military forces. This system enables logistics support: efficient telecommunications and the rapid deployment of heavy-duty transport. However, there are concerns around Thailand's deployment of man power in disaster relief. These include (a) a lack of disaster-preparedness knowledge, leading to inaccurate estimations and lack of order (the establishment of an expert disaster management organisation to oversee risk assessment, potential outcomes estimation, and all information dissemination is needed, removing these responsibilities from the military commander) and (b) the current combined civilian and military forces may not fully convey disaster information to the local population. In Thailand specifically, Buddhist monks have an integral role in providing emergency relief. In Thailand, the role of the nursing team in disaster relief is not well defined. In a report by Wisitwong and McMillan² on a smaller scale

flood, the nurse's role is classified as being a part of the support team, involved in extraordinary work such as "making sandbags and building walls as a defense against water". Nurses, as members of the community team, assisting in all possible work is important. A documented systematic plan for disaster relief is urgently needed. In other countries, there is a systematic plan that can be followed. For instance, in Malaysia, the civil authority has responsibility over disaster relief, international aid organisations work with the Foreign Ministry, domestic aid is the responsibility of the national safety committee, and the military assists the civil authority in disaster relief.

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Provenance

This paper was not commissioned.

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