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Evaluation of the Efficacy of Disaster Response

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During the foreseeable future, we will continue to witness a rapid growth in the world's population, particularly in developing countries, many of which are regularly afflicted by natural disasters and adverse climatic changes. In addition to producing immense human suffering and disease, such disasters may very well lead to increased political and social instability, which will further erode the capacity of these countries to cope with natural and man-made disasters. A rigorous scientific, technological and intellectual approach will be required to solve this truly global problem and will involve the broadest possible range of disciplines.

Specialized or comprehensive assessments of natural (and technological) disasters call for skills from several disciplines including emergency medicine, epidemiology and engineering. These combined skills, already in short supply under normal conditions, are in great demand during disasters. All too often disaster relief consists of large, uncoordinated efforts based on what decision-makers imagine should be done, rather than what is actually

An indicator of the number of injured is essential in terms of planning for emergency health care services. (Guatemala Earthquake, 1976).