

Disaster Literacy Level in the Professional Education of Paramedics, the Key Staff of Prehospital in Türkiye

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Letter to the Editor

Cite this article: Doğan M (2025). Disaster Literacy Level in the Professional Education of Paramedics, the Key Staff of Prehospital in Türkiye. *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness*, **19**, e171, 1
<https://doi.org/10.1017/dmp.2025.10115>

Received: 28 January 2024

Revised: 11 April 2025

Accepted: 11 June 2025

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Dear Editor,

The earthquake that occurred in Türkiye on February 6, 2023 reveals the need to be prepared for disasters in every dimension, especially post-disaster intervention. It is important for paramedics to be prepared for disaster intervention in their pre-professional training. Determining the disaster literacy level in the vocational training of paramedics, who are the key staff personnel of prehospital emergency health services in Türkiye, and their training in disaster education are important in terms of disaster management.

Disaster literacy is defined as “an individual’s capacity to read, understand, and use information to make informed decisions and follow instructions in the context of mitigating, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from a disaster.”¹ In recent years, there has been a numerical increase in disasters in the world and in Türkiye. These increases cause an increase in the number of affected individuals, and loss of life and property. More than 9 billion people have been affected by more than 15 thousand disasters that have occurred around the world in the last 30 years. Türkiye is a country at substantial risk of disasters due to its geological features, topography, meteorological conditions and especially the prevalence of tectonic layers.² According to the disaster management and natural disaster statistics data in Türkiye published by the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (DEMP) in 2018, a total of 22 982 disasters occurred. In addition, in the disasters that occurred between 1980 and 2017 in Türkiye, natural disasters claimed the lives of an average of 6 to 25 people per million annually.³

According to the results of some national and international studies, it has been determined that there is a relationship between the level of disaster literacy and disaster education.^{4–5} By improving disaster literacy in paramedics, they can affect public health after the disaster in which they fulfill their emergency health services duties, and can affect individual health before the disaster by contributing to themselves, their family and their environment. The recent earthquake in Türkiye, described as the “Disaster of the Century,” showed once again that we need to be prepared for disasters of all sizes. For this purpose, efforts to increase individual and society disaster preparedness, disaster awareness and disaster training should be accelerated. Lectures on disaster education can be included in the curriculum of university students, especially in health schools. In addition, training on disasters can be provided by organizing activities such as panels, symposiums, conferences and courses.

Competing interests. None.

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