

STANDARD SETTING

Development of Disaster Medical Assistance Team Standards and Assessment of the Teams' Preparedness: Insights from The Saudi Arabian Experience

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Background/Introduction: Disaster Medical Assistance Teams (DMATs) are essential during emergencies. To optimize efficiency and readiness, the Saudi DMAT established comprehensive Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) so that it could pursue with vigorous implementation the goals outlined in Saudi Vision 2030 and the Ministry of Health's strategic plans. These operational models, incident management systems, and procedures govern team deployment, operations, and demobilization in disaster response settings.

Objectives: This paper discusses the development and implementation of new standardized protocols for DMATs in Saudi Arabia, highlighting challenges, strategic decisions, and enhancements in team preparedness and performance.

Method/Description: The S-DMAT SoPs were developed through a detailed review of international standards and best practices, tailored to Saudi Arabia's specific needs. Stakeholder consultations, iterative revisions, and pilot testing ensured the medical response teams are knowledgeable and ready for efficient, timely, and resource-adequate deployment.

Results/Outcomes: The standardized protocols significantly improved S-DMATs' readiness and operational performance. Enhanced coordination with local and international agencies, better resource allocation, and effective incident management were achieved. The SoPs provided a structured approach to deployment, triage, and patient care, ensuring high-quality medical assistance in critical situations. Evaluations showed that S-DMAT consistently met or exceeded key performance indicators, demonstrating quick mobilization and efficient execution.

Conclusion: Establishing standardized SoPs for S-DMAT has been pivotal in advancing disaster response in Saudi Arabia. The protocol development process emphasizes maintaining relevant training, meticulous review, and flexibility in disaster preparedness. These results offer valuable insights for future improvements to DMAT protocols and contribute to global best practices in disaster medical response.

Prehosp. Disaster Med. 2025;40(Suppl. S1):s8

doi:[10.1017/S1049023X25000391](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049023X25000391)

Review of Capacity and Standards of Local Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs) in the Post-Pandemic Period

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Background/Introduction: The requirement for timely, agile, effective, and scalable local EMT response is well demonstrated in disasters and complex emergencies. Given ongoing climate and geopolitical challenges, potential for civil conflict, and the stress on prehospital and health systems post COVID; it is imperative that we ensure local EMTs are appropriately trained and prepared. In recent years a focus for WHO has been to build strong national disaster medical responses, through developing national standards, and embracing community readiness and resilience. Early local disaster medical responses, is considered most important in major emergencies.

Objectives: Review capacity and standards for Victorian Medical Assistance Teams (VMAT's) within national and global contexts

Method/Description: We undertook a review of a State based jurisdictional EMT the Victorian Medical Assistance Teams (VMAT) to assess the current state of cache, staffing, training, and exercising via stakeholder surveys and onsite visits. In addition, we undertook a literature review including, Medline search, local and international policies, standards and reviewed best practice international and national exemplar EMTs.

Results/Outcomes: In the post pandemic recovery phase, the local Emergency Medical teams have had substantial pressures that negatively impacted training and exercising, and were compounded by staff turnover, maintenance of equipment cache and deployment challenges.

Conclusion: Due to post pandemic pressures, we note the significant challenges to EMTs. As a result of our review, we have formed a local EMT working group to look at outcomes for consideration of number and placement of teams in order to facilitate best practice in team and kit management, rapid mobilization, training and exercising.

Prehosp. Disaster Med. 2025;40(Suppl. S1):s8

doi:[10.1017/S1049023X25000408](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049023X25000408)