

MEETING ABSTRACTS**Emergency Medical Services Preparedness in Dual Disasters: War in the Era of COVID-19 in Armenia**

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Background/Introduction: Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is a critical part of Disaster Medicine (DM) and can limit morbidity and mortality with sufficient training and experience. Emergency systems in Armenia are in an early stage of development and there is no Emergency Medicine residency training available to EMS physicians. The Armenian EMS system was challenged by two concurrent disasters when the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War arose during the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) pandemic.

Objectives: This study assessed the state of disaster preparedness of the Armenian EMS system and effects of the simultaneous pandemic and war on EMS providers.

Method/Description: This was a cross-sectional study by anonymous survey of Yerevan EMS physicians who provided care to war casualties and COVID-19 patients.

Results/Outcomes: Most participants had been a physician for \leq three years (52.1%). Many were in residency (64.6%).

Battlefield medicine experience was limited prior to the war. The majority reported no experience treating mass casualties (52.1%), explosives wounds (52.1%), or performing surgical procedures (52.1%). Greater battlefield medicine experience was found with \geq three years of experience as a physician (z-score -3.26; P value $<.01$) or EMS physician (z-score -2.76; P value $<.01$), and being ≥ 30 years old (z-score -2.11; P value = .03). Most participants felt in danger during the war at least sometimes (89.6%).

Conclusion: EMS physicians in Armenia had limited training and experience in DM prior to the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War, but practiced in a setting requiring extensive DM knowledge as evidenced by the simultaneous response to the COVID-19 pandemic and war. There is a strong need for DM training within the Armenian EMS system.

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