

0741

Disaster preparedness among Filipino occupational therapists

Peñafrancia Ching^{1,2}

¹*University of the Philippines - Manila, City of Manila, NCR, The Philippines,*

²*Philippine Academy of Occupational Therapists, City of Makati, NCR, The Philippines*

Introduction/Rationale: The threat of disasters caused by natural hazards is constant in the Philippines. Situated in the Pacific Ring of Fire, the country experiences various hazards annually. Disasters due to these have caused massive social, economic, physical, and psychological damage. There is numerous literature stating that disasters are avoidable through preparedness measures, however, there is limited literature that describe actual practice among occupational therapists in the Philippines.

Objectives: The study described the extent of engagement in disaster preparedness roles/activities; the preparations undertaken; and possible factors that influenced engagement.

Method: A survey was conducted among Filipino OTs with disaster response experience. Respondents answered an online questionnaire that included demographics, a list of preparedness roles/activities, and topics necessary for preparedness based on available OT literature.

Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data.

Results: Despite disaster response experience, respondents performed preparedness roles minimally with clients and institutions. The role/activity most engaged in was attending trainings related to disaster response. The role least engaged in was serving as a resource person for planning for prolonged disasters. This may be attributed to respondents having only two to three years of practice in a clinical setting. Most had trainings related to psychosocial interventions in disaster situations. Effects of human displacement were not included in their trainings.

Conclusion: The study provided a glimpse of the Filipino OTs' involvement in disaster preparedness roles. The results will help the profession strengthen these roles through relevant OT education and professional development. Further studies are necessary to strengthen this claim.