

Providing Assistance to Areas Affected by Nepal Earthquake

A 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck Nepal on April 25 causing massive damage, leaving many dead and injured. JICA dispatched a Rescue Team and Medical Teams of the Japan Disaster Relief Team (JDR) to Nepal in response to a request from the Government of Nepal.

The Rescue Team, which was dispatched on April 26, conducted search and rescue activities at Krishna Mandir Temple near the Old Royal Palace (Hanuman Dhoka) in the capital city of Kathmandu. From April 30 onward, the ancient capital city of Bhaktapur was assigned as Japan's operating site and they persevered with strenuous search operations using rescue dogs.

Meanwhile, for the first time for Japan, the Medical Team dispatched an Expanded Function Team which would meet the needs for advanced medical care such as surgical operations and dialyses in addition to conventional medical care. After providing support for surgery at a hospital in Kathmandu, they moved to Bahrabise Village in Sindhupalchowk District and opened a field clinic equipped with expanded functions. The Japanese Medical Team served as a medical hub for providing treatment for the severely injured patients. The first and second teams treated 987 patients and operated on 22 patients in total.

Moreover, a Reconstruction Support Survey Team consisting of experts from the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) and universities was dispatched on May 20. JICA will continue to investigate the extent of damage caused by the earthquake, and to examine the direction of concrete reconstruction plans and the possibility of Japan's further assistance toward Nepal's restoration and reconstruction through further consultations with the Government of Nepal, aid agencies of other countries and international organizations.



Rescue Team conducts search activities in a concerted effort with the Nepalese Army



The medical team provides support including medical consultations and surgeries in Bahrabise Village.



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I provided support including medical consultations and conducted surgeries at a field clinic established in Bahrabise Village, Nepal as a member of the second Japan Disaster Relief Medical Team. Beside injured patients, there were persons who were suffering from upper respiratory tract infection and diarrhea because of the poor sanitary conditions. As Bahrabise Village is located in a mountainous area with poor medical conditions and the only hospital capable of performing surgeries was damaged, it took as long as 6 hours to carry in a patient in some cases.

The happiest moment for me was when I saw smiles on the faces of a patient and his/her family on the morning after surgery. On the other hand, I was once forced to evacuate to Katmandu because of an aftershock when I

was about to start an operation on an 11-year-old boy. The operation was performed after evacuation, and I could see the boy's smile after all, but the experience reminded me of the difficulties of medical activities in times of disaster as well as the weight of our responsibilities.

The duration of our emergency relief activities is limited, but it is necessary to provide support so that patients can rehabilitate into society after our activities are completed. For that purpose, we are making constant efforts to build mutual trust with local medical facilities and provide sufficient explanation to patients and their families. I believe that we need to establish a system to follow up patients' conditions on a regular basis after providing support such as medical consultations and surgeries.