

After the first wave of deaths due to collapsed buildings and landslides, WHO stresses on the need to accelerate the health response action so as to minimize deaths and disabilities resulting from delayed treatment. Patients are now coming in with infected open fractures and gangrene. WHO expects that soon the lack of clean drinking water and sanitation facilities to the affected population will create a major health threat, such as epidemics of diarrhoea, typhoid and other water borne diseases that can only be prevented by providing sufficient quantities of clean drinking water.

WHO assessment teams from other disasters such as the Tsunami and the Bam Earthquake report that the gigantic devastation in northern Pakistan goes far beyond any other disaster seen. The effects of the earthquake on the affected community are enormous. The cities of Bagh, Rawalakot, Muzaffarabad and Balakot have suffered massive destruction. It is still not clear what the impact of the disaster is in inaccessible areas such as Neelum Valley (north of Muzaffarabad). The lack of basic necessities such as food, water, blankets and tents are also affecting health workers in the field. The previously existing health system has ceased to function, as many health facilities have been destroyed or damaged, and health staff is either highly traumatized, injured, deceased or occupied taking care of their family members. Lack of clean water supply is also seriously hampering the provision of health services to affected populations.

Medical and surgical field teams report thousands of patients treated per day. The large number of injured is overwhelming the current capacity and is still not sufficient to meet the existing needs. Many injured may not be treated on time, resulting in unnecessary deaths and incapacity.

The Pakistan Institute for Medical Sciences (PIMS) is receiving hundreds of patients daily and is sending stabilized patients to other public hospitals around the country in order to admit the seriously injured in remote areas. The hospital has put up tents in the hospital grounds for families of patients.

WHO stresses the importance of clean drinking water for the affected population and all health facilities to prevent the outbreak of diseases.

Saturday 20th of April 2024 12:23:22 AM