

“Report on activities by DMAT from the Fukushima Red Cross Hospital during the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami Disaster”

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\*DMAT: Disaster Medical Assistance Team

(English Translation by Red Cross Nuclear Disaster Resource Center)

~~~ We would like to thank to all other organizations for their support to rescue Fukushima ~~~

On the day the earthquake occurred, the Fukushima Red Cross Hospital decided to dispatch DMAT team and we headed to the Minamisoma City Hospital. We transported two patients in emergency, one who was drowned by the tsunami and the other one who got external wound, to the Fukushima Medical University Hospital. Because of the nuclear accident occurred on Mar 12th, we had to face relief activities for the evacuees from vicinities of the nuclear power plant and the responses to radiation exposures. On Mar 13th, the team was in charge of DMAT supervisory duties, as the first experience, at Fukushima Medical University.

I joined the relief activities as a member of DMAT. I was dispatched from the Fukushima Red Cross Hospital after the occurrence of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. DMAT's medical team consists of medical professionals who have been trained for deploying quickly to an affected area and providing emergency medical treatments in the event of disasters such as an earthquake. Immediately after the earthquake, DMATs were called for deployment. Although our hospital had also suffered from the Earthquake, we decided to go. Many staff were working in the hospital at that time since it was daytime on a weekday, that helped expedite our decision. Our team (one physician, two nurses, one pharmacist, and one administrator) headed to the Fukushima Medical University Hospital in the City of Fukushima, which was assigned as the meeting point for DMATs that came from all across the nation. Only two teams arrived at the meeting point on the day of the earthquake from the affected area the Fukushima Medical University Hospital and us. According to the information gathered, we learned that there were no demands on the relief activities in the City of Fukushima, but there were many patients who were seriously injured by the tsunami in the Minamisoma City Hospital. So our team headed there quickly for medical treatments and transferring patients. Many patients were lying down on the entrance floor of the hospital; it was just like a field hospital. For exact details, Dr. Keisuke Ota who was working together with us at the hospital summarized it in his book.

Until the following morning, our team made two round trips to the University Hospital to carry two seriously injured patients (one drowned and one external wound from the tsunami). As for the road conditions, although we saw some partial collapses on our way, there were no major problems. However we were caught in a traffic jam in the City of Fukushima, resulting in running out of oxygen in the portable gas cylinder which made us scared.

The damages from the Tsunami were so large that only a few survivors were rescued, and the DMAT activities in Fukushima were thought to be settling down by the 12th. Then the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant accident changed the situation completely and we had to face relief activities for the evacuees evacuating from the vicinities of the power plant. The responses to radiation exposures also became a big issue. Since we were the local team

based in Fukushima; on 13th, we were in charge of DMAT supervisory duties at the Fukushima Medical University Hospital. In the beginning, I was puzzled because of the sudden request, but with the cooperation of the Red Cross Fukushima Chapter, our team was able to manage to gather information from the evacuation centers and the affected hospitals as well as responding to the evacuees. On the night of 13th, we handed these tasks over to another Fukushima DMAT team, and headed back to our hospital.

Despite the fact that we are a hospital in the prefecture where nuclear power plants are located, we were deeply concerned about the lack of preparedness for nuclear power plant accidents and the lack of knowledge of radiation. I would like to thank, from bottom of my heart, the many DMATs and other organizations for their assistance in helping to rescue Fukushima. Last but not least, I would like to express my sympathy to the affected people and from now on I would like to continue doing my duties in these areas.