



Event Name	UNITED '24, the 1st International Conference on Disaster Management hosted by Believers Church Medical College Hospital (BCMCH) in Thiruvalla, Kerala
Event date	14/11/2024 – 17/11/2024
Event venue	Believers Church Medical College Hospital (BCMCH) in Thiruvalla, Kerala
Details of the event	<p>Believers Church Medical College Hospital (BCMCH) in Thiruvalla, Kerala, hosted UNITED '24, the 1st International Conference on Disaster Management, from November 14 to 17, 2024. The conference, themed "Unfolding Newer Innovations for Tomorrow's Emergencies and Disasters," aimed to enhance awareness, preparedness, response, recovery, and resilience in disaster management.</p> <p>Day 1:</p> <p>The topics on the first day of the conference majorly involved the foundations of disaster management. The conference commenced with sessions on disaster definitions, the disaster cycle, planning, and response strategies by Dr Gilbert Burnham, from John Hopkins university. Later emphasis was placed on building resilience in the aftermath of disasters by Dr Triny A Mathew from Wayne University , and Dr Jayakumar C from NIMHANS. A notable panel discussion featured by Trini Mathew, Dr Gilbert Burnham, Dr Jayakumar C, Ms Kelsey Trulik, Dr Jazeela A, and Ms Ziya Arun. The discussions explored needs and strategies of building individual and health systems resilience. The KSDMA representative Dr, Jazeela A, Hazard Analyst public health expert, emphasized the importance of strengthening strategies to enhance community health resilience. She discussed how a</p>

health system and a community should respond to early warnings. Ms. Ziya, Hazard Analyst Psychology discussed the children's resilience and recovery after disasters. The discussion also continued about how communities can stay informed about flood risks and better understand their vulnerabilities. Following the panel discussion, individual sessions on other topics such as the health risks of climate change by the climate scientist Dr Roxy Mathew Koll and , ethical considerations during mass casualty triage by Dr Vijaya Arun Kumar from Wayne state university, were also discussed. Later the Participants engaged in Exercises focused on post-disaster damage and needs assessment headed by Dr Gilbert Burnham and Dr Vijaya Arun Kumar.

#### Day 2:

The second day broadly delved into lessons learned from past disasters and the day started with the discussions of learnings of the 2018 Kerala floods and the Nepal earthquake by Dr Ramu Kharel from Brown University, Dr Justin Raj, P.H. Kurian - former additional chief secretary in charge of Disaster Management, and other eminent Indian administrative officers who had a vast experience in disaster management. Further Dr Gilbert Burnham talked on providing health services and the concept of "building back better". After tea break, the session continued with panel discussion on ethical responses to disasters chaired by Dr Midhila mallika , SPO , KSDMA, Dr Vijaya Arun Kumar, Dr Gilbert Burnham, Dr Freston Marc Sirur -from Kasturba Medical College. Dr. Midhila Mallika, serving as the State Project Officer in KSDMA, highlighted the complexities inherent in disaster management. She along with other panelists discussed the challenges of making equitable decisions under resource constraints and the importance of maintaining ethical standards to ensure fair and compassionate treatment of all affected individuals. The day also covered emergency disaster triage ethics, strategies for establishing health services considering cultural and religious differences by some among the previous speakers. Dr KPP Abhilash from CMC Vellore, gave a talk on hospital surge capacity. The day concluded with a panel discussion focused on emergency medical training and services during disasters. The discussions helped the participants to learn about emergency medical protocols and procedures necessary for effective response and management during disasters. Including triage, treatment prioritization, casualty assessment and coordination with other emergency services.

#### Day 3:

In day 3 , the sessions addressed disease management in emergencies, covering both communicable and noncommunicable diseases by dr Mathew and Dr Burnham. Innovations in disaster medicine education were also presented, emphasizing experiential learning by Dr Laura Tilley from George Washington University School of Medicine. Later , a session on disaster risk reduction and post disaster recovery was presented by Dr Jyothi Krishnan. Other learning from day 3 were included mental health disorders during disasters by Dr Jayakumar C , geriatric and palliative care during disasters by padmashri Dr M R Rajagopal (Pallium India), and the role of orthosis and prosthesis in trauma situations by Dr Markanda Chandra Dash. It followed by a Panel discussion on institutional mechanisms in disasters by experts. Mr. Fahad Marzook, Hazard Analyst meteorology, involved in this panel discussing the roles of various institutions in disaster management. He evaluated the roles, functions, and interplay of various institutions involved in disaster management, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, international bodies, and community-based organizations. His insights shed light on the critical importance of inter-agency coordination and the integration of meteorological data in disaster preparedness and response strategies. The day ended with sessions on setting up a command and response center and organizing effective disaster response teams by Dr Marc Rosenthal from Wayne University.

Day 4: The final day featured Practical Application and Policy Discussions, The day started with featuring a disaster mass casualty mock drill, providing hands-on experience in emergency response by Dr Marc Rosenthal and Dr Keith Alangaden from Wayne University. Subsequent sessions reviewed the development of national disaster management policies and plans, with insights from experts like Prof. Vinod Chandra Menon (Founder member of NDMA). The post lunch discussions evaluated India's current status in disaster management, identifying strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement, and recommended strategies to enhance future disaster preparedness. The discussions were chaired by prof. Vinod chandra menon, Dr. Tej Prakash, Dr. Pratheesh C. Mammen, and Dr. B Mohammed Asheel. Representing KSDMA, Dr Pratheesh C Mammen highlighted the role of technology and the need of participatory approach in disaster management activities. Being the first responder the community member should have knowledge about disaster management mechanisms in the region and also the do's and dont's during an emergency situation. He also reiterated the fact that all health institutions should have a "hospital safety plan" as per the guidelines.

	<p>Participatory implementation is the need of the hour which will create resilience in the future in the burgeoning risks.</p> <p>Participants gained comprehensive insights into critical health requirements at each disaster stage, the significance of mental health resources in post-disaster recovery, and the ethical complexities inherent in disaster response. They developed effective coordination strategies for delivering essential health services, considering cultural and religious differences, and examined the roles of various institutions involved in disaster management. Additionally, they analyzed disparities between effective and ineffective disaster responses, assessed specific health services required across diverse scenarios, and recommended disaster preparedness strategies to enhance resilience in future crises. UNITED '24 provided a comprehensive platform for participants to gain in-depth knowledge and practical skills in disaster management, fostering a collaborative approach to building resilient communities.</p>
<p>Number of participants</p>	<p>443</p>
<p>Resource person/organizer from the side of SDMA/DDMA</p>	<p>Dr Jazeela A, Hazard Analyst Public Health</p> <p>Ms. Ziya Arun , Hazard Analyst Psychology</p> <p>Dr. Midhila Mallika, State Project Officer</p> <p>Mr. Fahad Marzook, Hazard Analyst Meteorology</p> <p>Dr Pratheesh C Mammen, State programme coordinator , UNICEF-KSDMA</p>

Photos



