

## Healthcare Workers' Perceptions of Disaster Risk Management in Saudi Arabia Hospitals

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This study examines the effectiveness of Disaster Risk Management (DRM) strategies in public hospitals across Saudi Arabia, focusing on the perspectives of healthcare workers (HCWs), such as doctors, nurses, and administrators. Despite Saudi Arabia's significant DRM efforts, an empirical assessment of their effectiveness, particularly from the frontline workers, is still needed to identify potential areas of improvement. The inherent subjectivity and potential biases in risk perception notwithstanding, these findings could guide future policy improvements.

A cross-sectional study was conducted using a descriptive, quantitative, non-probability sampling method among HCWs in 22 public hospitals across four regions of Saudi Arabia: Eastern, Western, Southern, and Central. These hospitals were selected based on their size, range of services, and geographical diversity. The HCWs were asked to evaluate the four DRM phases—Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery—through questionnaires administered via Qualtrics and distributed via email and WhatsApp. Data analysis was performed using SPSS.

The results indicated that the majority of HCWs perceive the DRM strategies as efficient, with disaster mitigation and response strategies being viewed as more effective than preparedness and recovery strategies. The study also revealed significant regional differences in perceived effectiveness of DRM strategies, with HCWs in the central region perceiving their strategies as more effective, particularly in disaster mitigation and preparedness, than their counterparts in the other regions.

This study offers novel insights into HCWs' perspectives on DRM in Saudi public hospitals. Despite the overall positive perception of DRM strategies, the regional disparities underscore the need for harmonized and improved disaster risk management practices. Future research should focus on understanding the factors behind these regional differences to develop interventions that strengthen disaster preparedness and response strategies nationwide.

*Keywords:* Disaster Risk Management<sup>1</sup>, healthcare workers<sup>2</sup>, Saudi Arabia<sup>3</sup>, mitigation<sup>4</sup>, preparedness<sup>5</sup>, response<sup>6</sup>, recovery<sup>7</sup>, perceptions<sup>8</sup>, regional differences<sup>9</sup>.