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**Amir Elahi Johri***Ministry of Health-Oman, Oman***Significance of environmental health in emergencies and disasters: Lessons learnt & way forward**

Any part of the world can be affected by disasters and emergency situations, affecting human lives and the environment. Therefore, environmental health has a significant role in all phases of disaster planning, preparedness, response, recovery and rehabilitation. Actually, the environmental health hazards directly influence the human health, social wellbeing and survival, e.g. shelter, water, wastewater, sanitation, waste, hygiene, food, pollution and so on. Environmental health activities are interdisciplinary involving different authorities, organizations and professionals from many backgrounds and are involved in wide range of activities not limited to health, for example community participation, health education, search and rescue operations, training, public education and other social aspects related to protection of health and the environment. A large scale disasters and emergencies have substantial humanitarian, social, political, security and economic implications. Despite the fact that environmental health is widely believed to be integral part of disaster management but still it is not given the due significance when it comes to allocation of human and financial resources in an event of emergencies and disasters. Environmental health team has to exert more to work with different sectors to achieve desirable results; therefore the environmental health practitioners are encouraged to closely interact with other relevant authorities and agencies and develop strong working relationships by enhancing environmental health role in the event of emergencies and disaster management. An integrated approach with other sectors should be promoted to improve all phases of emergency/disaster management cycle.

**Biography**

Amir Elahi Johri is a Public Health Physician and has extensive experience in environmental/public health. He has worked for many international and national organizations around the world. His expertise includes environmental health in emergencies, environmental and occupational health policies and strategies, environmental health risk assessment, migrants and refugees health, etc. He has worked for World Health Organization (WHO) at the national and international level. He was also engaged with International Organization for Migration (IOM) with Syrian refugees in Jordan. Currently he is the Advisor at the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health, Ministry of Health Oman. He has presented several papers at different international forums. He is actively involved in developing national environmental health and occupational policies, strategies and actions plans, as well as training and teaching of environmental and occupational health disciplines.

[dramirjohri@gmail.com](mailto:dramirjohri@gmail.com)**Notes:**