



# Role of a foreign non-profit rehabilitation association in a large-scale natural disaster: the PAPA experience in Typhoon Haiyan, a program report

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## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Super typhoon Haiyan was the strongest and deadliest typhoon ever recorded in history, that hit the Philippines on November 8, 2013, killing at least 6268 people, with 28,689 injured and 1061 missing. This wind and water disaster left extensive devastation in the city of Tacloban and neighboring towns of Samar and Leyte province (Fig. A). Relief efforts poured in from local and international institutions. The Philippine American Physiatrist Association (PAPA) is a small group of US-based physiatrists with Filipino heritage/descent, partnered with the Philippine Academy of Rehabilitation Medicine (PARM), a national rehabilitation society, for a relief and medical mission to the Tent City of Tacloban (San Jose) and the rural community of Burauen, Leyte on February 17-18, 2014. The group was composed of 8 physiatrists, 3 of whom live locally. Funds were raised by PAPA through donations and logistics were handled by PARM.



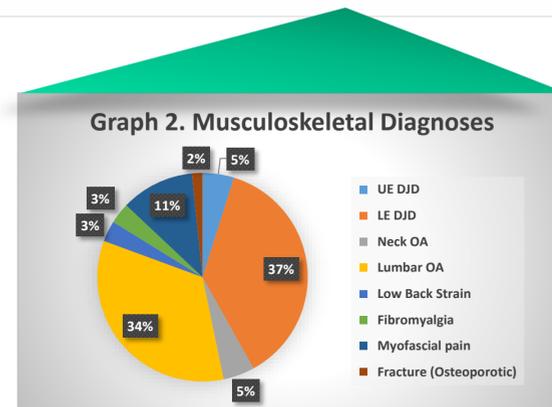
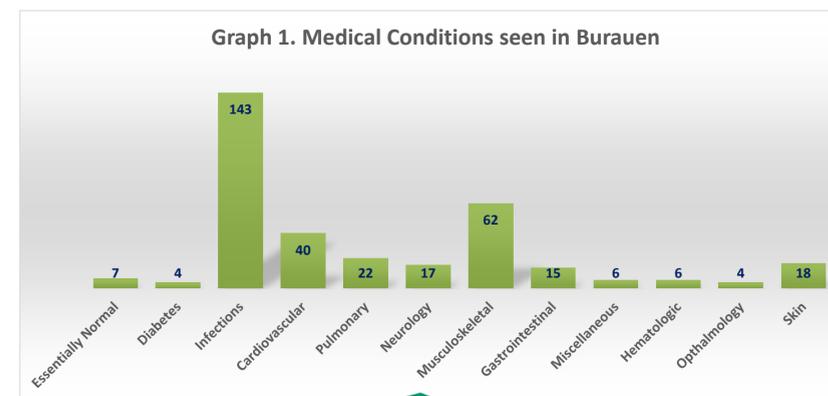
Fig. A Typhoon Haiyan's wrath, with sustained winds of up to 195mph

## ASSESSMENT/RESULTS

1200 and 300 hygiene kits were distributed at San Jose and Burauen, respectively. A basic need/medical screening survey was administered to the Tent City residents which showed a continuing need for basic necessities along with materials for rebuilding homes and employment. Common medical conditions were related to acute infections, mainly respiratory. 34 persons with disabilities were identified. Free medical-rehabilitation consultations with limited medications were provided to residents in Burauen. Nearly half (46%) of the 283 patients served were pediatrics and 94 were males. Infections were the most common diagnoses (143; 42%) followed by musculoskeletal conditions (62; 18%), of which 80% were degenerative joint disease. Seventeen neurological cases (5%) were evaluated (Graph 1 and 2).



Fig B Tent City residents receive hygiene kits.  
Fig C<sub>1-2</sub> Physicians providing Medical consultation



## DISCUSSION

At 100 days Post-Haiyan, primary care diagnoses, including secondary injuries sustained during acquisition of basic provisions, relocation and clean-up efforts were common in the two community populations visited. Physiatrists can effectively treat this range of conditions with specialized focus on musculoskeletal and neurological injuries as well as on persons with disabilities. Similar efforts were displayed by Physiatrists responding to hurricane Katrina. Medical and rehabilitation follow-up of mission patients is a concern due to social, economical and financial limitations. Inter-organizational coordination is essential in disaster relief efforts, as seen in the 2011 Great Japan earthquake. Post-recovery efforts require support of local professionals. Such individuals provide the continuity of care needed for rebuilding communities and promoting sustainable development.

## CONCLUSION

The Medical and relief mission was successful. Physiatrists can play a significant role after a natural disaster. Through collaborations, a foreign non-profit rehabilitation association and its members can provide valuable direct support of local efforts in a large-scale natural disaster.

## REFERENCES

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