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Title

The role of Information specialists in disaster situations.

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Abstract

The objective and importance of Disaster Information Management are stated. This action is led by the Latin American Center for Disaster Medicine, institution subordinated to the Cuban Ministry of Public Health through its Documentation group, its experience in the training and research activities and in the development of services and products in correspondence with the needs and mission of the Cuban Health workers in our country, in Latin America and the Caribbean. The strategies of cooperation and integration with Disaster Information Networks: Regional Disaster Information Network (CRID), Caribbean Disaster Information Network (CARDIN) are expressed. Also the integration of the processes of information management and the multisectorial and multidisciplinary character of the actions devoted to strengthen the participation of the institutions in the development of collections through the Virtual Library on Health and Disasters is explained. The role of the information specialist in the social communication work is detailed as a result of the activities designed for the preparedness of the most vulnerable sectors of the community such as boys, girls, teenagers, women, pregnant women, the disabled, old persons and the family so as to achieve a culture on prevention to face disaster situations. The preparedness activities and the program for these community groups and the elaboration of documents and specialized services are also described. For this purpose, a comprehensive group work methodology was designed to develop actions related to social communication activities, elaboration of documents directed to the preparedness of vulnerable groups with a prevention and mitigation character. The training of specialized human resources where the health, education and library personnel play an important role is also included. The Information Literacy and upgrading activities are described. The importance of counting on qualified and trained staff to carry out preservation, conservation and restoration of information material and facilities and the elaboration of a Disaster Reduction Plan in each Information Unit is also pointed out. The Cuban experience concerning the training of human resources in this field is explained.