

Shortage of Medical Materials Hampers Bone Surgery

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
Thursday, 30 April 2015 18:09



On April 29, the Tzu Chi Relief and Medical Team in Nepal began disaster assessment. Besides serious shortages in drinking water and tents, they also found that most injuries involve fractures and broken limbs. However, proper treatments were hampered by the lack of medical materials needed for operations.

On that day, the team was split into two groups. Dr. Chien Sou-hsin, chief of the team, led a group to nearby hospitals to care for patients and understand their needs. He pointed out that the disaster area is in shortage of water and tents. Also, the weather has been rainy and victims are staying in parks and open areas because they do not dare to go home while aftershocks persist. They do not even have a plastic sheet to shelter themselves. Later he went to a small hospital nearby and found 19 patients with broken limbs, left untreated due to lack of necessary bone materials for surgery. Another hospital nearby has up to 150 patients with broken limbs yet the doctors there also cannot treat them due to the same reason. All the doctors can do is to stabilize the fractures and use painkillers.



Many houses collapsed during the earthquake. Residents are cooking their meals by the side of the road. After nightfall, temperature falls drastically. In the middle of the roads, people are holding candlelight prayers for those who have passed away. In deep prayers, they pray that there would be no more disasters.

The stricken area is vast. Besides shortage of food, accommodation is the other major problem. The team considers the feasibility of delivering pre-fabricated houses.

When the Tzu Chi team arrived in Kathmandu, Tien Chung-kwang, Taiwan's representative in India, also arrived to help. He said: "I believe that the experience of Tzu Chi, together with the spirit which they have shown in the past, will bring help to the victims of the disaster in Nepal."

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