



Türkiye Psikiyatri Derneği / Psychiatric Association of Turkey
Genel Merkez / Headquarters

The Psychiatric Association of Turkey (PAT) Earthquake Activities Between February 19 and March 5, 2023

As soon as the news of the February 6 earthquakes were received, the PAT Executive Committee meeting with Disaster Preparedness and Intervention Unit was held at 09:00, and all 22 branch managements of The Psychiatric Association of Turkey gathered at 12:00. We published reports describing our activities during the first two weeks in the aftermath of the earthquake on our association's website

(<https://psikiyatri.org.tr/TPDDData/Uploads/files/InformationonPATsActivitiesRegardingthe.pdf>, <https://psikiyatri.org.tr/TPDDData/Uploads/files/PATFebruary13-192023EarthquakeActivities.pdf>). In this brief report, we would like to inform you about the

activities we carried out between February 19 and March 5.

Within the framework of the planning of PAT-Executive Committee and PAT Disaster Preparedness and Intervention Unit, an announcement was made through the WhatsApp volunteer group to create a supervisor pool. The aim was to enable our colleagues in the earthquake zone to consult with colleagues with experience in trauma in case of need. As a result of the responses received to these announcements, 43 supervisors were selected. Each supervisor was assigned to a specific province. Thus, we aimed to establish efficient cooperation between the supervisors and our colleagues in the region. Since it was reported that there was much less need for supervisors in Diyarbakır and Adana compared to other provinces, the supervisor lists were created for Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Adıyaman, Malatya, Gaziantep, Osmaniye, Kilis, and Şanlıurfa. While creating the lists, it was aimed to ensure that the supervisors' suitability in terms of day and time was taken into account, and that the urgent supervision needs in each province could be met as rigorously and as quickly as possible. Within this framework, the supervisor lists were prepared and shared from WhatsApp groups with our colleagues located in the region on February 18, 2022. We planned to update these lists on a monthly basis, as needed.



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The first PAT Post-Earthquake Mental Support Supervision Session was held on February 20, 2023. The session was led by Işıl Vahip and Ejder Akgün Yıldırım, who elaborated on how to manage difficulties encountered during the evaluation and treatment of the individuals affected mentally by the earthquake. The second session was held on February 27, 2023, and was led by Münevver Hacıoğlu Yıldırım and İrem Yıldız. The supervision program will continue with a session on disadvantaged groups after the earthquake, which will be led by Leyla Gülseren and Burhanettin Kaya on Monday, March 6 at 20:00.

TÜRKİYE PSİKİYATRİ DERNEĞİ
Deprem Sonrası Ruhsal Destek Süpervizyon Oturumları 1

Erken Dönemde Yaklaşım

Işıl Vahip Ejder Akgün Yıldırım

Link, sms ve mail ile paylaşılacaktır.

20 ŞUBAT PZT | 20.00

TÜRKİYE PSİKİYATRİ DERNEĞİ
Deprem Sonrası Ruhsal Destek Süpervizyon Oturumları 2

Erken Dönem İlaç Kullanımı ve Ruhsal Değerlendirme

Münevver Hacıoğlu Yıldırım İrem Yıldız

Link, sms ve mail ile paylaşılacaktır.

27 ŞUBAT PZT | 20.00

TÜRKİYE PSİKİYATRİ DERNEĞİ
Deprem Sonrası Ruhsal Destek Süpervizyon Oturumları 3

Deprem Sonrası Dezavantajlı Gruplar
(Kadınlar, mülteciler, engelliler, etnik gruplar)

Leyla Gülseren Burhanettin Kaya

Link, sms ve mail ile paylaşılacaktır.

6 MART PZT | 20.00

The difficult days we are going through have led to a decision to change the format of the PAT Annual Meeting, which will be held in May. We will share the experiences we have gained during this process, the methods of crisis resolution, the scientific aspect of intervention in disasters, and transfer important learnings to inform the future.

Due to the earthquakes, the subsequent calamities and the difficult times following the disaster, we decided to change the format of the PAT Annual Meeting, 2nd International and 26th Clinical Education Symposium, which will be held in May. We are waiting for our valuable colleagues to come together in solidarity at the PAT Annual Meeting 26th Clinical Education Symposium and Solidarity Meeting, where we will share the experiences, we have gained through the process, capitalize on effective methods of crisis-management, and implementing scientific interventions during times of disaster, and pass on the important information to the future. Program details will be shared very soon.



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The PAT Online Support System for Psychological Problems After the Earthquake has been launched. 226 colleagues responded to the volunteer call in the first stage. Due to the increasing number of applications and rapidly filling appointments, the support system needs more volunteers, with the aim of providing services to health



workers and search and rescue team members in earthquake areas. The PAT Online Support System for Psychological Problems After the Earthquake allows volunteers to determine their own working hours. Therefore, we invite all colleagues to join in solidarity. The volunteer application form is as follows:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Mo_0oz1GmaLsvLASZ_2q9OxKVt0NeHsrfjGZN33vj_M/viewform?ts=63eb7201&edit_requested=true

Though numerous letters we sent to the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Family and Social Services, and Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency from the first week of the earthquake, we emphasized the importance of creating an early and long-term strategic plan. Since there has not been a response to these letters, a call was made to hold a meeting with competent and experienced mental health professional organizations and relevant Ministries and Institutions such as The Psychiatric Association of Turkey, Turkish Psychologists Association, Public Health Specialists Association, and Social Service Specialists Association.

Furthermore, PAT caravans, tents, and containers have taken their place in areas affected by the earthquake. As announced in the PAT Volunteer Activities Report dated February 19, 2023 (<https://psikiyatri.org.tr/3710/turkiye-psikiyatri-dernegi-gonullu-faaliyetleri-raporu-19-subat-2023>), two caravans with additional logistics and cash support were provided by a



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pharmaceutical company (Ali Raif İlaç), direct institutional support from Antalya Chamber of Medicine, and our own resources were directed to areas in urgent need, where terrain conditions were not suitable for container installation. Currently, a PAT caravan and volunteers are providing mental health and psychological support services at the İskenderun State Hospital Millet Park Psychiatry Outpatient Clinic. One PAT caravan and a tent served as the only mental health center in Antakya city center with two of our volunteers in Antakya Defne Sevgi Park. Due to the request for evacuation of the area, it had to be relocated to the El Arabi Tomb Garden in Armutlu. In addition, we continue to provide services to tent cities, districts, and villages with mobile mental health support teams and our volunteers in the region.



PAT İskenderun State Hospital Millet Park Psychiatry Outpatient Clinic



PAT Sevgi Park Mental Health Unit and Its New Location in El Arabi Tomb Garden in Armutlu



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Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam Üniversitesi TPD Konteynerları

We have conveyed written remarks to the Higher Education Council expressing concern regarding the risks involved in dispatching religious officials to address mental health needs of earthquake survivors and individuals adversely affected by the earthquake. We cited that religious officials have no accredited training and are not competent in the field of psychology and psychopathology, and therefore cannot meaningfully contribute to aid efforts in this realm. It is necessary to ensure that the appointed religious officials work within the limits of religious counseling according to the individual needs identified during psychosocial support. You can access the letter through the following link: <https://psikiyatri.org.tr/3711/yokun-quot-manevi-rehberlik-quot-yapabilecek-gonullu-cagrisina-iliskin-acikl>

It was seen that 72% of the positions opened in the field of mental health and illnesses in the 109th State Service Obligation Lottery were allocated to the provinces in earthquake zones. The field reports prepared by our disaster zone coordinators drew attention to the continuation of serious difficulties related to the maintenance of health services, shelter, and security. A letter was sent to the Ministry of Health requesting the shortening of obligatory periods of state service and the initiation of work aimed at providing shelter and basic needs to prevent our colleagues from experiencing burnout and secondary effects of the disaster. Click the link to access the letter: <https://psikiyatri.org.tr/3718/devlet-hizmet-yukumlulugu-kurasinda-deprem-bolgesinde->



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The Psychiatric Association of Turkey, the TTB-UDEK Executive Board, and the Turkish Thoracic Society jointly called on the Medical Specialization Board to protect the basic rights of teaching staff and resident doctors who provide medical specialization training at universities and training and research hospitals affected by the earthquake, stating that any assignment that is made without protecting their basic rights is against the law, and that opportunities for institutional changes should be considered carefully with temporary assignments allowed at universities in cities where teaching staff and resident doctors have accommodation with their families. Click on the link to view the joint statement: <https://psikiyatri.org.tr/3721/deprem-bolgesindeki-hekimler-ve-tipta-uzmanlik-ogrencilerinin-haklari>

The Earthquake Volunteers Meeting, where PAT field volunteers shared their experiences, was held on March 1, 2023. Our volunteers met with PAT members via video call and conveyed that they felt safe in the field with the support of the association. These heartfelt comments warmed our hearts and increased our motivation for carrying out volunteer activities.



Requests that have been submitted to PAT headquarters for psychological support from institutions whose employees/members have participated in search and rescue activities or have experienced earthquakes in the region were evaluated. Support requests from 200 miners, 1000 search and rescue team members, a union with 6000 members operating in the region, and a local bar association were organized and directed to psychosocial support networks in three major cities including the PAT Online Mental Support System, and psychiatry clinics in the associated regions. A large city municipality's and a civil society organization's request to receive training on mental health support to aid earthquake relief efforts were evaluated by the education coordinators of PAT Disaster Preparedness and Response Unit.



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PAT Regional Coordinators, Disaster Crisis Management members, and colleagues in the region scheduled to have Zoom meetings. The first meeting was held with colleagues in Adıyaman and Kahramanmaraş. The problems in the region and the difficulties that our colleagues experienced were discussed and addressed directly.

A coordination group was established in the PAT Disaster Preparedness and Response Unit for psychiatric specialists who came as volunteers from abroad and requested cooperation. This enabled both the recognition of foreign colleagues' voluntary activities, authorization, and inclusion in the delegation of duties.

It was determined that our psychiatry residents working in medical faculties and research hospitals in areas directly affected by the earthquake experienced intense anxiety due to current conditions caused by the earthquake, such as problems with housing, losses, and the impact on their education. A rapid study was carried out with the PAT Psychiatric Trainees Committee regarding specialized psychiatry education for the the first 10 days, and physical status, operation, and resource identification were shared on the association's website (<https://psikiyatri.org.tr/3714/deprem-%20bolgesindeki-psikiyatri-uzmanlik-egitimi-hakkinda-TPD-durum-degerlendirm>).

As The Psychiatric Association of Turkey Disaster Crisis Management, our priority is supporting the right to housing, promoting working in a safe environment, and bolstering education for all resident physicians working in the region. We expect the authorities to fulfill their obligations and responsibilities, and we will be on watch until they are carried out. The Disaster Crisis Management and Education Planning and Organization Committee have started to work on educational needs for psychiatric trainees in the region.

Sincerely,

PAT Disaster Crisis Management