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EDITORIAL

We prepared this issue amidst an earthquake disaster that deeply affected our country and was defined as the great disaster of the century. A major earthquake is one of those catastrophes that severely disrupt the functioning of a community or society, involving widespread human, material, economic, or environmental losses and impacts that exceed the affected community's ability to cope using its own resources. All disaster events require a prompt and adequate response, and assistance must be provided and monitored until normal services resume. To meet these demands, it is essential to develop national emergency plans and implement necessary measures.

These days, as we experience the effects and sorrows of the great earthquake as a country, it is important to assess how prepared our laboratories are for disasters. Essentially, disaster or emergency plans should be incorporated into the quality assurance processes of medical laboratories. In these situations, it is necessary to ensure the continuation or uninterrupted provision of laboratory services. On the other hand, it may seem impossible to prepare for every single event that could affect the laboratory. The optimal emergency response plan is a single plan that ensures the laboratory continues to serve in various disaster scenarios. In this case, it is necessary to develop a "Laboratory Emergency Management Plan."

The laboratory may be affected by the disaster, or it could be a facility providing services during the disaster. Electricity and water supplies may be cut off, laboratory facilities may be damaged, equipment may be compromised, and personnel may be lost. When providing laboratory services during a disaster, it is crucial to determine the critical tests and minimum equipment necessary related to the disaster. In such a situation, it is important to recognize which functions are most vital to your organization and allocate resources to those functions during the disaster recovery phase until enough resources are available again to restore all operations.

We hope that disasters do not occur. However, nature is too powerful for us to resist. We need to accept the facts and coexist harmoniously with nature. Laboratory supervisors have a significant role in coordinating, maintaining, and restructuring health services during disasters and returning laboratories to their routine activities.

We extend our deepest condolences to the healthcare workers and citizens who lost their lives in the earthquake of the century, offer our sympathies to their families, and wish a speedy recovery to the injured.

Best regards,

Prof. Dildar Konukoğlu, M.D.