

ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OF DRUGS FOR PEACEKEEPING HOSPITAL IN AFRICA: EXPERIENCE FROM CHINA

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ABSTRACT

Maintaining international peace and security is an important purpose of peacekeeping operations. Now United Nations (UN) are playing an important role in abating regional conflicts preventing or reducing the bloody conflict and the peaceful settlement of international disputes. China has consistently supported and actively participated in the UN peacekeeping operations, making a positive contribution to world peace. South Sudan became independent in 9 July 2011, and we participated in the first peacekeeping operation to South Sudan in January 2012. Now we would like to share experience of participation in drug support of level II hospital in South Sudan, and we hope this article will work for the follow-up pre-deployment medical detachment of the UN peacekeeping operations and the implementation of their medical task.

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[I] REPORT

1.1. Acquired Preparation of drugs

All drugs of level II hospital are prepared from home country. Before deployment on UN operations, self-sustained requirements should be transported by airlift and sealift to South Sudan. Emergency drugs should be airlifted, because it often takes over 3 months for sea shipment to arrive. Preparation of drugs should begin as early as possible. It is better to begin with the pre-deployment organizing and training, because after the training, there would be little time left, we have no chance to deal with emergency. For example, if some drugs purchased are nearing their expiration date, they would be of no use after their arrival by sea. On the other hand, packing lists in two languages should be accomplished after packing; it is also difficult to complete this in limit time.

1.2. Transport and storage of drugs

Most of drugs are transported through sealift because of the weight limit of airlift. However, sealift takes a long time and air humidity is high, we should take necessary precaution for the drugs. For example, glass packaging should be avoided for large liquid solutions, to prevent breakages. When packing, some buffering should be prepared in case the drugs are squeezed. In addition, the box should be strong, durable and sealed. Some drugs, such as aerosol containing propellants can not be transported by air, while other drugs that need to be kept cold should be airborne. In peacekeeping mission area, the

environmental temperature can reach up to 40°C. Storage condition can not meet the requirements of many drugs. Because of the adverse conditions of transportation and storage, we should check the drug quality carefully when dispensing prescriptions. For example, we cannot dispense leaking eye drops or if a vitamin C injection turns yellow, it should be rejected.

1.3. Checking and disposal of expired drugs

Because the medical contingent bring with them many drugs, at some point, some drug do expire. In addition, we have to store some emergency drugs. Gradually, many drugs expire. So we check the expiration date of each drug every month and pick out outdated drugs in time. It is also necessary to check the expiration date when dispensing prescriptions. In order to avoid unnecessary wastage, we donate the excess drugs to a local public hospital in proper time. Humanitarian aids to the civilians should be performed under the united standard and planning of UN agencies. The health education and medical skill training are more emphasized than the donations of medical materials. It is important for the sector to build the outer medical support system.

1.4. Preparing return and evacuation

Pharmacist should make drug raising plan and complete inventory count before evacuation for a smooth handover.

However, epidemiologic studies have documented a range of psychiatric disorders among personnel serving in the military such as, general anxiety disorder, panic disorder, and major depression [1]. Peacekeepers are widely homesick, or anxious at that time. Carelessness in working may lead to adverse consequences. For example, if the pharmacist can not take notice of the shortage of antipyretics, or there are plenty of these drugs which are about to expire, then the following detachment can not supply antipyretics in time and future medical work would be seriously influenced by the lack of these drugs. So the pharmacist should have a high sense of responsibility, working hard and carefully.

[II] CONCLUSION

Within the deployment of the UN peacekeeping mission in south Sudan and the specific medical conditions of Chinese peacekeeping medical detachment, we summarized some useful experience. We think it will provide useful reference for the follow-up pre-deployment medical detachment of the UN peacekeeping operations.

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CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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