

Global Update

News in Brief

The National Rural Health Mission

Sixty seven billion rupees are earmarked for this new project for the year 2005-2006. If it is carried out with passion and devotion, it will transform the health of India's villages. The plan is to identify 250,000 women volunteers, nearly 1 per village or cluster of villages across 18 states of India. They will be called social health activists. What will they do? They will teach about hygiene, sanitation, contraception etc. They will treat minor illnesses. They will accompany sick patients to hospitals. Some responsibilities of the DOTS program, malaria program etc. are also included. Our national programs start out with a roar and end with a whimper. But we hope for a happier ending this time (BMJ 2005;330:920).

Dealing with disasters

Evidence based interventions which will be useful in emergencies are now available free online on www.cochrane.org. The idea was

born in wake of the tsunami tragedy. The site will provide immediate information about various crisis management tools from cholera vaccination to management of post traumatic stress disorder. Policy makers who have to make decisions about type of health care to provide will be greatly benefited. Concise summaries as well as links to detailed information are easily available on the site. The Cochrane collaboration is a unique effort to collate evidence based information around the world which it publishes quarterly on its online library. After the tsunami disaster, the full Cochrane Library is available free to people in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, the Maldives, Malaysia, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Somalia, Kenya, and the Seychelles until July 2005 (www.thecochrane_library.org) (BMJ 2005; 330:926).

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