

Field Hospital Services for Patients with COVID-19 in Bandar Abbas, Iran

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Abstract

Background and aim: To manage the COVID-19 crisis in Iran, the military forces have come to the fore according to their equipment and capabilities and aided people and the ministry of health to deal with counteracting and handling this crisis. The Iran Navy acted in line with its mission to serve the people in this crisis and established a field hospital in Bandar Abbas, a port city on the southern coast of Iran, on the Persian Gulf.

Methods: According to the announcement of government hospitals to lack of empty capacity in hospital and request assistance from the military, the Navy rushed to the aid of Bandar Abbas Hospital with establishing field hospital with an initial capacity of 50 beds that could be expanded as needed. This field hospital was established in March 2020 with the aim of serving patients with COVID-19. This 50-bed hospital operated with equipment such as four ICU beds, a lungs CT scan, and a diagnostic laboratory, and initially had 32 staff members, including specialist physicians and nurses (Figure 1). The healthcare service process for COVID-19 in this hospital was as follows; people who came to the triage department with one of the early symptoms such as fever, cough, headache, runny nose, body aches, or shortness of breath were visited by a physician at the reception. If COVID-19 was suspected, a temporary medical record was filed and the patient was monitored. If the further evaluation was needed, the patient was referred to the CT department. If a complication was found in the CT in favor of pulmonary infection and COVID-19, with the coordination of the infectious specialist, the patient was transferred to the inpatient ward of COVID-19 for treatment. Individuals who did not have acute symptoms but had suspected CT findings on COVID-19 were referred to quarantine centers depending on the patient's condition or home quarantine with training some medical advice. Hospitalized patients were monitored continuously for vital signs. The percentage of arterial oxygen saturation was checked and, if necessary, oxygen therapy was prescribed. Until discharge, treatment, medication, and nursing care were provided. In this field hospital, the definitive diagnosis of COVID-19 was made by PCR test and CT scan findings.



Figure 1. Some view of the Naval Field Hospital

Results: In the first 3 months of the Naval Field Hospital opening in Bandar Abbas, 868 people (510 men - 358 women) were admitted. The age range was 6-90 years old and the majority (n=762) was in the age range of 20-60 years old. Major clinical symptoms recorded in these patients were respectively; shortness of breath, fever and chills in 456 people, cough, headache, and sore throat in 188 people, weakness and lethargy in 105 people, digestive problems and anorexia in 73 people and decreased sense of taste and smell in 46 people. In this field hospital, the mortality rate for patients with Covid-19 was 6%.

Conclusion: Providing health care services in this field hospital to the people by the Navy can be an effective help to the Ministry of Health and medical personnel in confronting the crisis caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic in Bandar Abbas city.

Keywords: Field Hospital, COVID-19, Navy, Military, Iran