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An experience of trauma cases: Patients hit by rocks due to the Mt Ontake volcanic eruption in Japan

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Japan has 108 active volcanos which are about 7% of the one in the world. Mt. Ontake (3067m) is located 30km from Takayama, at the center of Japan, erupted without a precursor at 11:52 am on September 27, 2014. Many climbers on the summit were involved in the eruption, and 63 people were dead or missing. Early the next morning, a Disaster Medical Assistance Team from our hospital and Mountain Rescue Team carried out rescue and first aid operations for a group of 26 climbers who had been evacuated to a cabin located on the highest summit in Gifu Prefecture. Of the climbers, 3 who required medical treatment were transported by helicopter to our hospital. Case 1: A 39-year-old female had open fractures of the left clavicle, scapula, and ribs and underwent debridement under general anesthesia. Case 2: A 52-year-old male had an open fracture of the left humerus and underwent irrigation and fixation. Case 3: A 46-year-old male had serious bruising and swelling on the left side of his body due to extensive contusions with high serum levels of creatine kinase. All the patients had blunt injuries and penetrating injuries that were classified as secondary or quaternary blast injuries caused by the impact of high-velocity fragments of volcanic rock, debris and gas. Although it is difficult to predict a volcanic eruption, it may be possible to reduce disasters by installing shelters and wearing protective clothing.

Biography

Takashi Shiroko graduated from Gifu University School of Medicine Japan in 1985 and got PhD in 1995. He researched about cancer immunological system in Roswell Cancer Institute, Buffalo NY in 1996-97. He is a chief of Emergency Medical Center and the assistant Director of Takayama Red Cross Hospital. He did war surgery as a surgeon in Sudan (2002), Afghanistan (2004), Pakistan (2005) and Uganda (2010-11) as a member of ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross, Geneva). In Japan, he did medical relief in Kobe (1995) and Tohoku (2011) earthquake.

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