

Humanitarian Aid for Injured Casualties at the Israeli Syrian Border

Coral Spector^{1*}, MAJ Avi Benov^{2*}, MAJ Roy Nadler², MAJ Sami Gendler², MAJ Tomer Erlich², COL Yair Barak², LTC Anat Sabbag², LTC Itzik Malka², COL Avi Yitzhak², COL Tarif Bader², COL Elon Glassberg²

¹"Tzameret" program, The Hebrew University Medical School, Jerusalem

²IDF Medical Corps

*C. Spector and A. Benov contributed equally to the manuscript and are co-first authors.

Corresponding Author: Avi Benov, Email: avi.benov@gmail.com

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Introduction: Since February 2013, the Israel Defense Forces- Medical Corp (IDF-MC) has provided medical care to injured victims of the ongoing civil war raging in neighboring Syria. Initial medical care to these casualties was provided by Role 1 medical teams stationed at the border. The series of patients described in this unique scenario are an example of the IDF-MC's focused efforts on Role 1 medical care.

Methods: Care provided by IDF-MC medical teams, including Role 1 casualty care, is regularly documented and after-action reports are conducted. Records of casualties arriving at the Israeli Syrian border from February 16th to December 12th, 2017 were extracted from the Israel National Trauma Registry (ITR). Patients who did not have a casualty card were excluded.

Results: Over the study period, 2,785 Syrian casualties received initial Role 1 care, most of whom, 2,339, were trauma casualties. The median age was 24, and 93.3% were men. Overall, 15% (350) patients were under the age of 18. Role 1 life-saving interventions performed included 134 (5.7%) patients receiving airway management and 55 (2.4%) patients received treatment for chest injuries. Damage control resuscitation with the use of Tranexamic Acid (TXA) and reconstituted freeze-dried plasma (FDP) was given to 222 (9.5%) and 75 (32%) casualties respectively.

Conclusions: The experience of the IDF-MC Role I facilities in caring for civilian injuries along a hostile international border is unique. In this capacity, the IDFMC has demonstrated effectiveness in triaging patients and providing life-saving and resuscitative interventions including TXA and freeze-dried plasma. In select patients, endotracheal intubation and cricothyroidotomy were able to provide effective airway opening. Efforts to provide medical relief to victims of the Syrian civil war continue. While we hope for a better future, it is our obligation to take what we have learned and continue to learn and use it to support the improvement of trauma care and hopefully save more lives. ■

Keywords: Trauma; Israel Syria; Casualties.