

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

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Respect for science and immorality

"Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, but expecting different results."

from the novel "Sudden Death" by Rita Mae Brown

Dear readers of the Turkish Journal of Surgery,

Türkiye was literally shaken by a massive earthquake on February 6, 2023. The earthquakes, with epicenter city of Kahramanmaraş, affected 10 cities with a total population of around 13 million people and neighboring Syria. The official death toll has been rising every day, but as of the end of february it is approaching 50.000. However, the numbers of those injured, those receiving treatment and those suffering from post-traumatic psychological disorders are in the hundreds of thousands.

It is difficult to explain the fact that so many people have lost their lives, even though it is well known that Türkiye is an earthquake country, even though there are many experienced experts in this field and even though the finance needed has been already allocated to prevent earthquake damage with special taxes. It has been 24 years since the huge Marmara earthquake that struck Türkiye in 1999, but what we have experienced since February 6th reminds us of some painful truths.

Despite the painful experiences of the Marmara earthquake, Türkiye is perhaps even further behind than in 1999, both in preventing the devastation of the earthquake and in post-disaster organization. When I look at this issue as the editor of a scientific journal, I may see that these intolerable facts have many close relations with the science. First of all, we have to assume the fact that it is not earthquakes but rotten buildings and bad disaster organization that kill the people. If the rules of geology, geophysics, urban planning and engineering as dictated by science were respected, would our hearts be so heavy? Would it not have saved more of our people if trauma surgery and disaster organization had been guided by science? We saw in the most painful way what can happen when science and the objective facts of science are not respected.

But is it enough to respect the science? Unfortunately, not. After such a severe disaster, human morality must also be questioned and evaluated. How were those structures built, who built them, who turned a blind eye when the requirements of science are obvious? In the 24 years since the Marmara earthquake, where have the funds collected for the expected major earthquakes been spent? If we as a country do not see these as a general moral problem, I am afraid that we will always be talking about the same things when we experience new disasters.

Finally, my deepest condolences for those who passed away in the earthquake.

I wish courage and patience to our people who continue to live the sufferings of the earthquake. I would also like to thank the wonderful people from all over Türkiye and the world who rushed to the region after the earthquake, sent aid, and provided any kind of support they could. Seeing that both the people of that region and Türkiye were not alone, has relieved this pain awhile.

Sincerely,

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Editor-in-Chief

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