

# Cognitive appraisal of quality of life among historical trauma survivors : focusing on medical service accessibility and social welfare of Jeju Sasam survivors

Jimin Kim (jimin.kim@ewha.ac.kr)

Dept. of Health Convergence, Ewha Womans University

30th

International Conference on Health Promoting Hospitals and Health Services

## INTRODUCTION

The current research focused on state violence survivors, called Jeju April 3rd(also known as Jeju 4.3 Incident; '4.3' represents April 3rd, read as 'Sasam' in Korean). Since the special law for Jeju 4.3 incident was established, the victims and bereaved families have received the social support from the government. As part of the research on Jeju Sasam survivors' trauma experience and resilience mechanisms, the current research aims to explore how the state violence survivors appraised their 4.3 related social supports and quality of life during and after their traumatic experience.

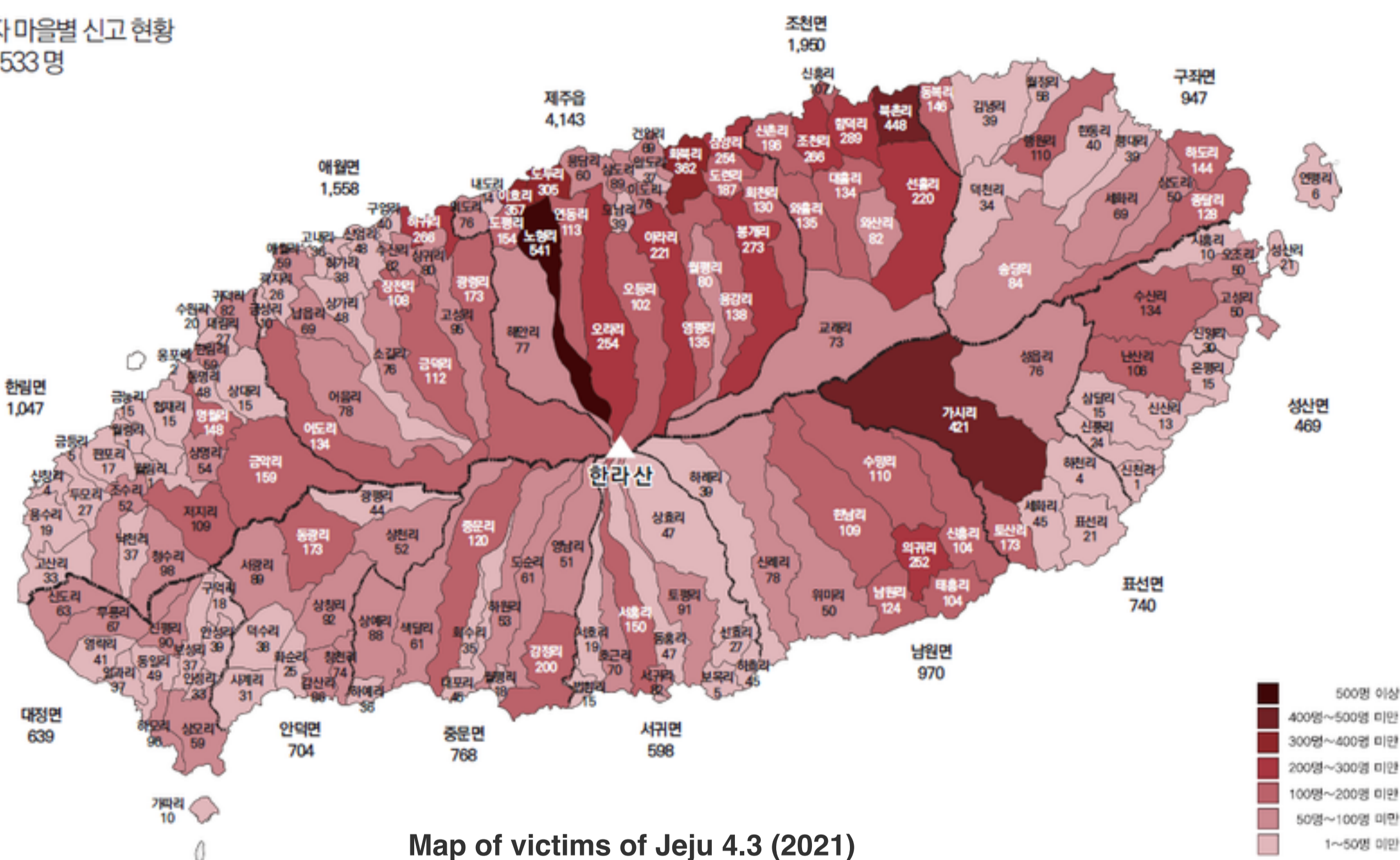
## ABOUT JEJU SASAM

Jeju Sasam was one of the representative state violence in modern Korean history from 1947 till 1954. Also, it is known as a based story for the novel, 'We Do Not Part' by Han Kang (2024 Nobel Prize Winner in Literature).

Jeju Sasam occurred on Jeju Island, a volcanic island located on the southern part of the Korean peninsula. Jeju Sasam occurred in a single province and began prior to the first election of a South Korean government during the era of the US Military government.

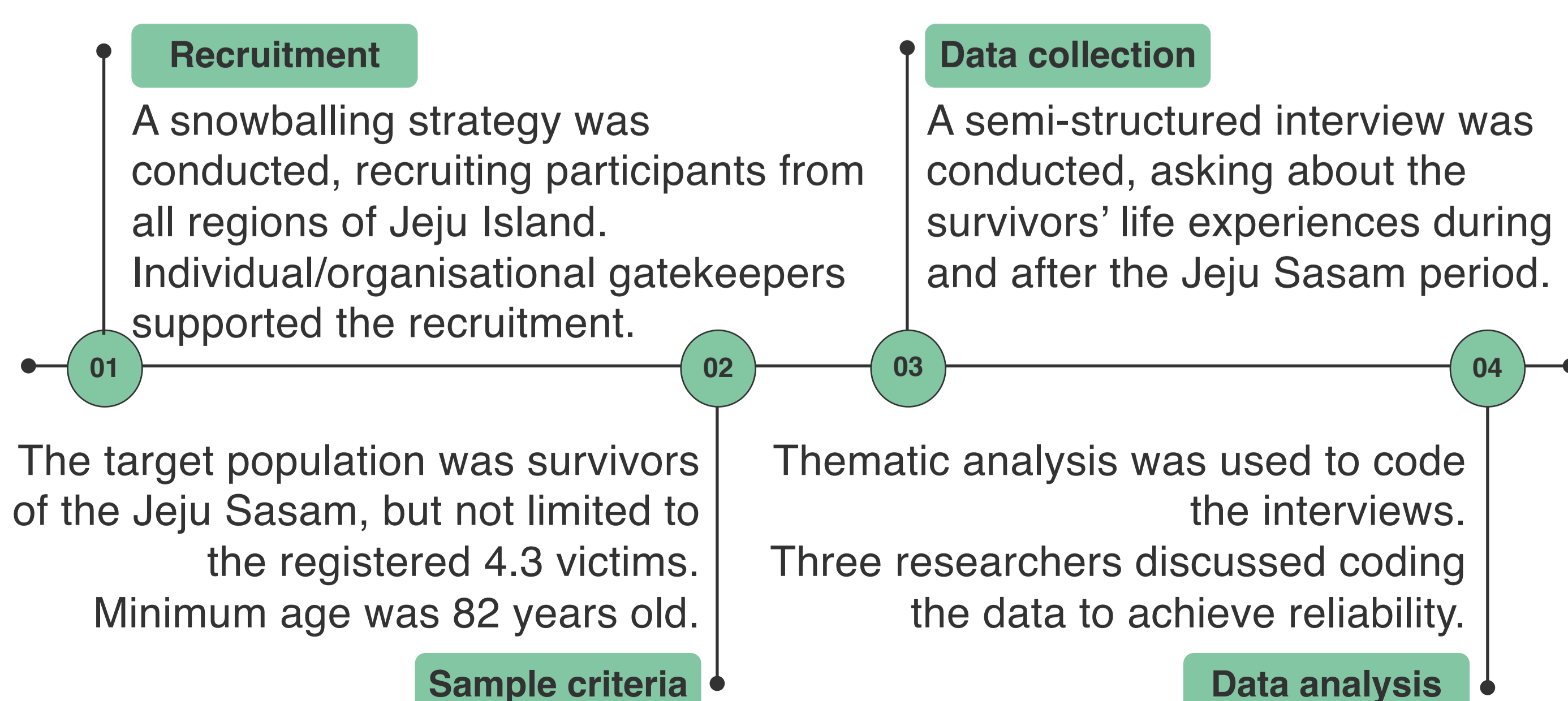
The authorities conducted several forms of crimes against humanity and violated the human rights guaranteed by the Constitution. Those wrongdoings were justified by the claim that it was eliminating a supposed communist insurgency on Jeju Island, which was people's uprising against the authorities' tyranny.

4.3희생자 마을별 신고 현황  
총계: 14,533명



The authorities perpetrated atrocities such as massacre, torture, imprisonment, harassment, arson, forced migration and sexual violence. The death toll is conservatively estimated to be at least 25,000 to 30,000 people, though the exact number can never be calculated. The number of victims due to Jeju Sasam is second only to the Korean War in modern South Korean history.

## METHODS



## RESULTS

- Total number of interviews : 50
  - Female: 28
  - Male : 22
  - Average age : 86.9 (Min. 83, Max 97)

The following themes indicate that medical accessibility is crucial to participants' survival, and furthermore, the social welfare system contributes to the positive appraisal of quality of life.

### Theme 1. Survival

Sub-theme	Resources	"...my mother's family wasn't living in hardship or no difficulties like having no property. We had lived very happily. Because my mother's family was rich."
	Lack of resources	"...If he could have gotten the shot(measles injection), he might have survived, but we didn't have even 7,000 won."

Having fields or property was a significant factor that participants implicitly ascribed to their survival of the era and its long-term aftermath. Their wealth was inherited from their ancestors or gained from family. Even though she experienced the collective trauma, a participant above believed that one's family did not experience hardship because they had enough resources to live happily. Therefore, having resources can contribute to not only their survival but also their happiness. The accessibility to medical facilities is also included in the resources. Unsurprisingly, a lack of resources was connected to the negative factors that influenced the survival of participants. The participant above lost her five-year-old younger brother because he could not be inoculated with the measles vaccine since they were too poor.

### Theme 2. Positive quality of life

"...the change in living is, compared to the old days, now it's luxury."
"How comfortable it is to live. Compared to the past, the country gives money to elderly people."

The physical development of the environment in survivors' lifespans was the factor that positively appraised their quality of life. Their threshold of 'good living' was based on their experiences of hardship after Sasam. A lack of essentials for maintaining basic living standards, such as adequate food and clothing, was no longer the problem it had been in the past. It also includes the social support by the government, which significantly supports the survivors' lives.

### Theme 3. Social wellbeing

"It's better to go there(senior community centre) than sitting alone."
"Everyone comes to the centre to play and spend their time."

Participants frequently described their social activities at the senior community centres. In fact, theme 3, 'Social wellbeing', mostly implies the survivors' social activities on various grounds. However, the current theme also indicates that social welfare accessibility is crucial to senior citizens like our participants' healthy lives. The government supports the centre's budget, and most villages have such centres. A senior community centre offers a shared space and programmes such as recreation or light exercise, for members to enjoy together.

## CONCLUSIONS

Building a proper welfare design is critical to trauma survivors' quality of life. Accessibility is a key to positive appraisal of survivors, therefore, it is essential to carefully design the facility's location and transport options.