Introduction to the International Health Regulations (IHR)

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Global public health security, 1980-2010

International Health Regulations (IHR)

Intergovernmental Working Group undertook revision of IHR(1969)

WHO Member States adopted the current IHR(2005) during the 58th World Health Assembly

In force since 15 June 2007

IHR describe rights, obligations and procedures for States Parties and WHO

Legally binding
Purpose and scope

“to prevent, protect against, control and provide a public health response to the international spread of disease in ways that are commensurate with and restricted to public health risks, and which avoid unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade” (Article 2)

What is new?

- From three diseases to all public health threats
- From preset measures to adapted response
- From control of borders to, also, containment at source
Event-related communication and management

Determine Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)
Make temporary and standing recommendations

Accessibility at all times
Primary channel for WHO-NFP event-related communications
Disseminate information within WHO
"Activate" the WHO assessment and response system

Accessibility at all times
Communication with WHO
Dissemination of information nationally
Consolidating input nationally

Detect
Assess
Report
Respond

National IHR Focal Point (NFP)

- "the national centre, designated by each State Party which shall be accessible at all times for communications with WHO IHR Contact Points under these Regulations" (Article 1)

- Functions (Article 4)
  - Accessibility at all times
  - Communication with WHO IHR Contact Point
  - Dissemination of information to national authorities
  - Consolidating input from national authorities
Decision instrument (IHR Annex 2)

Does the event meet at least two of the following criteria?

- Is the public health impact of the event serious?
- Is the event unusual or unexpected?
- Is there a significant risk of international spread?
- Is there a significant risk of international travel or trade restrictions?

→ Notification to WHO under the IHR

Core capacity requirements (IHR Annex 1)

- Annex 1A: Surveillance and response
  - Local level
  - Intermediate level
  - National level

- Annex 1B: Designated airports, ports and ground crossings
  - At all times
  - For responding to events
Core capacity requirements (IHR Annex 1)

Entry into force

Assessment of public health core capacities (Annex 1)
National action plan
Implementation of national action plan
Core capacities present

15 June 2007 15 June 2009 15 June 2012
(+2 years → 2014)
(+2 years → 2016)

Points of entry under the IHR

- States Parties shall designate the airports and ports that shall develop the capacities provided in Annex 1 (Article 19 and 20)
- States Parties may designate ground crossings that shall develop the capacities provided in Annex 1 (Article 21)
- States Parties shall provide a list of ports authorized to offer (Article 20):
  - The issuance of SSCC* and services in Annexes 1 and 3
  - The issuance of SSCEC** only
  - Extension of the SSCEC for one month
- States Parties shall identify the competent authorities at each designated point of entry (Article 19 and 22)
Setting priorities

- Ground crossing
  - Not applicable in Iceland
- Ports
  - Low numbers/ low velocity
- Airports
  - High numbers/ high velocity

Settings:

- Extreme dense national network of General practitioners
- Moderate/cold climate
- Emerging disease from Asia:
  - Healthy or death at Cape Hope
In The Netherlands

- Schiphol airport, Amsterdam Port, Rotterdam Port: 10 millions of inhabitants surrounding the region
- 400.000 ship movements
- Last 50 years no significant outbreak.

Examples

- Yellow fever:
  - South America:
    - Disease in population/vector present
  - India:
    - Healthy population/vector present
  - Iceland:
    - Healthy population/ no vector
Examples

- Cholera:
  - No swimming, drinking, feeding from port

Added value of IHR to ports?

- We check the ships
- We start communicating again
- We evaluate outbreak plans
  - Radio Medical service
- New scenario`s
  - Anthrax on cow skins
  - Noro outbreak on passenger vessel
Mandate

- Are all inspectors allowed to inspect
- On who’s authority

- What power in NL
  - Control certificate
  - Burn the ship, docks and buildings
  - Not much in-between

IHR Ship sanitation Guidelines

- Now interim guidelines
- New guidelines 2011?
- World wide guidelines
  - NO EU standard!
- Questions?