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Biorisk Management in Disease Detection Tabletop Exercise

Interagency Risk Communication during a Biological Incident

*Bali, Indonesia
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Why Risk Communication Matters



- **Risk Communication is a core capacity for the International Health Regulations**
- **During incidents, risk communication methods ensure your message is heard clearly and appropriate responsive actions are taken**
- **Coordinated, collaborative, multi-agency responses rely heavily on effective communication during biological incidents**

Role of risk communication during biological incidents



During an emergency, people act unpredictably

- Emotions of stress and fear can make it difficult to listen, understand & remember information
- Biological incidents can be particularly concerning as they are rare

Risk communication helps ensure your audience will

- Accurately perceive the reality of the crisis
- Respond appropriately to help with the emergency
- Not act in ways to worsen the situation

Audience beyond the public:

Agencies, coworkers in preparedness & response

Public health definitions for risk communication



Risk communication is the **interactive process of exchange of information & opinion** among risk assessors, risk managers, & other interested parties. (WHO)

Crisis and emergency risk communication is an approach used by scientists and public health professionals to provide information that allows an individual, stakeholders or an entire community.

- **to make the best possible decisions about their well-being,**
- **under nearly impossible time constraints,**
- **while accepting the imperfect nature of their choices.** (CDC)

Successful risk communication



GOALS FOR YOUR AUDIENCE

HOW YOU CAN SUCCEED

Make best decisions possible

- Know your end goal
- Listen to your audience
- Remember perception = Reality
- Use clear, concise messages
- Trust each other

Act within time constraints

- Be proactive, avoid reactive
- Provide timely, frequent messages

Accept imperfect choices

- Empathize with each other
- Discuss uncertainty

Three keys to risk communication



Know the goal

- Pre-determined outcome of the communication
- How the audience responds with a decision or action

Know the audience

- Do not make assumptions
- Understand audience background knowledge
- Trust, empathize, & interactively engage
- Use existing communication plan to know whom to contact

Know the message

- Clear, concise, timely, frequent
- Develop, practice main messages *before* emergency
- Validate that the audience received & understands the message

Risk Communication for this Tabletop Exercise



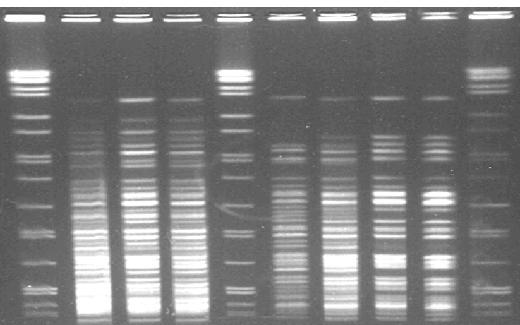
We will begin the tabletop exercise in just a moment

**During the exercise, when you need to develop messages—
remember these principles of risk communication for
public health emergency situations**

- There are no correct answers, and no wrong answers!
- Refer to the “Successful Risk Communication Chart” as needed

**Your audience may include people in your agency,
another agency, the public and possibly external
collaborators (another country)**

Thank You!



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