



Strategic Risk Communication: from pandemic preparedness to crisis recovery

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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PART I

Emergency Risk Communications



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Working Definitions

- Emergency Communication
 - Provide information about an unexpected crisis
 - ◆ *To explain how the crisis happened and what the audience should do*

- Risk Communication
 - Provide information about the potential outcome of a behavior or exposure and how to mediate risks
 - ◆ *To empower decision making*

Emergency Risk Communications (ERC) Working Definition

- Combines the urgency of crisis communication with the need to communicate risks and benefits to target audiences
 - ◆ *Explain crisis and empower decision making*

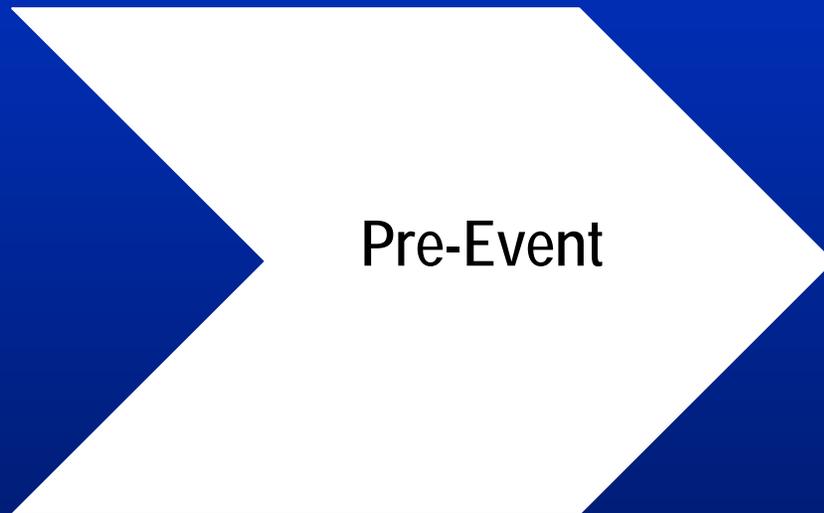
ERC Lifecycle



Each period has unique communications
and information requirements . . .

Pre-Event Communication Preparations

**Goal: Anticipate and prepare for the needs of the public,
the media & their partners**



- Inform stakeholders about the potential crisis
- Foster alliances with key stakeholders (identify core working group partners)
- Conduct behavioral science research

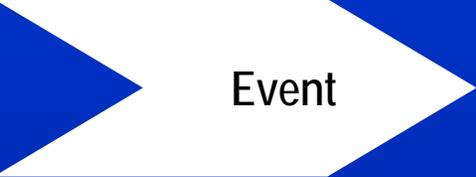
Local and Central Authorities

- Identify and coordinate relevant local and central crisis management authorities involved in communications
- Determine agency lines of command for emergency risk communications
- Train local authorities on emergency risk communications related to preparedness planning
- Establish TOR for local teams regarding risk communication

Potential Partners

- Public and private health care providers
- Veterinarians/other animal health workers
- Poultry associations/other livestock producers
- Government and private media
- Advertising and marketing agencies
- School authorities
- Religious groups
- Traditional leaders
- Market associations, women's and youth groups
- Police, military and other security

Event and post-Event Communications Planning



Event

- ◆ There will be demand for accurate, clear, concise, consistent, credible, and reliable information
- ◆ Stakeholder information needs during an event will only intensify



Post-Event

- ◆ Anticipate information needs for recovery and prevention of additional outbreaks

Responding to a Crisis

- Communicate with key audiences (provide simple, credible, verifiable, and immediate information to guide their responses)
- The inter-agency role during the “event” phase is to:
 - Assess the situation,
 - Determine the facts,
 - Verify the true magnitude of the event,
 - Determine response strategies, and
 - Disseminate the information in order to help move the public and other key stakeholders from the emergency situation into response and recovery.

End Goal: To prevent or contain additional outbreaks & minimize social and economic disruption



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Emergency Risk Communication Principles

- Don't over-reassure
- Address existing concerns before providing updates
- Emphasize the process that is in place
- Don't try to allay panic
- Acknowledge people's fears
- Avoid mistakes or confusion
- Give people something to do!

Establishing Trust and Credibility

1. Respond in a timely fashion
2. Be accurate and consistent
3. Be honest and transparent
4. Show empathy
5. Make yourself understood
6. Take the local context into account
7. Honor promises

Considerations for Message Development

- Adapt risk communication messages for emergency situations
- Messages based on characteristics of the outbreak situation
- Messages will depend on resources available and the control measures used
- Choice of materials and channels used will depend upon communication infrastructure, population affected and resources available

Consider what you want people to do, know and feel!



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Message Development, cont.

- Consider Cultural Sensitivity
 - ◆ Respect local beliefs and practices
 - ◆ Common practices regarding food preparation/ disease prevention
 - ◆ Culturally appropriate ways to address medical treatment and adherence
 - ◆ Geographic, financial and social challenges of proposed interventions

- State messages clearly, use simple language and include appropriate graphics

MUST PRE-TEST MESSAGES WITH TARGET AUDIENCES!



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ERC Summary Remarks

- Communications is strategic
 - ◆ relates to target needs
 - ◆ based on stated goals and objectives of “The Plan”
 - ◆ systematically developed & monitored
 - ◆ Firmly rooted in social science
- Successful ERC is consistent, accurate and timely
- Coordinated across federal, state and local levels

**Try to anticipate emergency situations
before they occur!**



What is crisis communication?

- Agency responding to a public health emergency informs the public about measures taken
- Community leaders inform the public about actions that need to be taken
- Health authorities should be highly visible



Communicating in a crisis is different

- Public must feel empowered – reduce fear and victimization
- Mental preparation reduces anxiety
- Taking action reduces anxiety
- Uncertainty must be addressed

Be first. Be right. Be credible.



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Best practices for effective communication

- Build trust
- Announce early
- Be transparent
- Respect public concerns
- Plan in advance

How can we effectively communicate?

- Define the audience
- Understand the concern of the audience
- Decide what you want as a result of the communication
- Select the right media
- Find the right tone
- Adapt the content

Know your audience

Characteristics:

- Concerns
- Attitudes
- Levels of interest
- Levels of involvement
- Histories
- Levels of knowledge
- Opinions
- Reasons for interest
- Types of involvement

Categories of Public Concern:

- Health
- Safety
- Environment
- Economics
- Aesthetics
- Fairness
- Process
- Legalities

Remember your partners

Partners in an investigation will also be partners in communication.

Domestic:

- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of the Interior
- Ministry of Information
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Security
- Department of Livestock
- Department of Disease Control
- Veterinarians and zoos

International:

- World Health Organization
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- NGOs





AI outbreak investigation

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Case Study: Pao Mai Province

- Province located in northern part of country
- Many earn income through backyard chicken farming
- Poor Infrastructure
- Physicians to population is 1:3,375

Case Study: Background

13 July

- A staff doctor at Pao Mai Provincial Hospital notifies the Provincial Health Office that they have admitted 2 previously healthy persons with severe respiratory illness
- A 3rd person with similar symptoms may be linked to these two cases
- The doctor is concerned that his patients may have avian influenza, as there are rumors that poultry outbreaks are occurring all over the province

Background: Case History

- Grandmother reports she, her husband and grandson visited a neighbor (a poultry farmer) on 4 July who owned chickens that had recently died
- According to Grandfather's account, Farmer had onset of fever and cough on same day as his grandson, but did not go to hospital
- Grandfather states that the poultry farmer's chickens began dying in late June/early July. Family cluster assisted with burial of chickens during visit.
- The treating physician requests assistance from the provincial health office

Investigation methods

- Interview hospital staff
- Review medical records
- Contact tracing and interviews

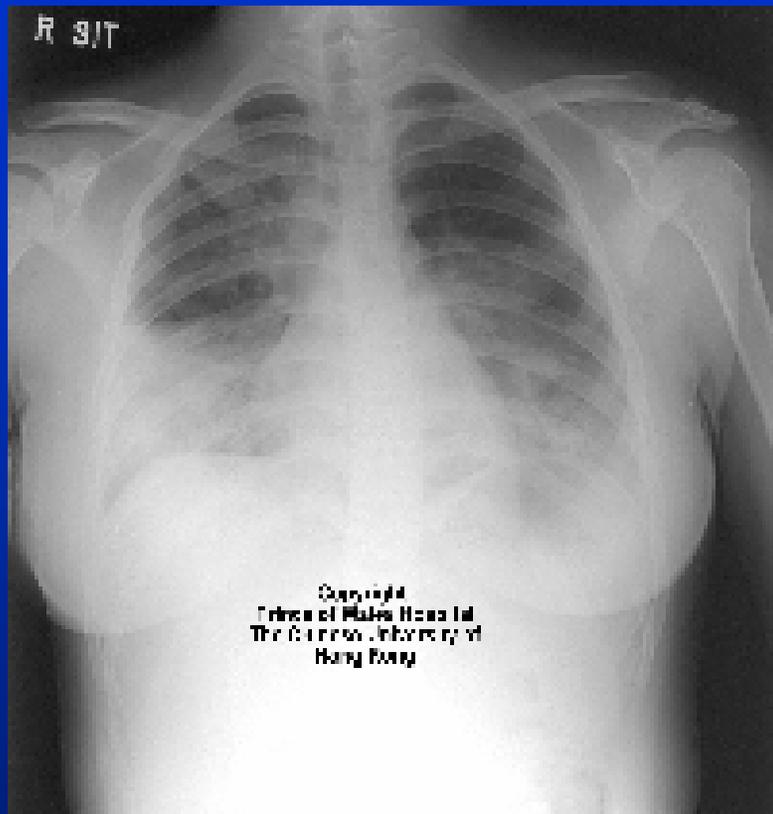
Case Definition

Possible/ Suspect	Probable	Confirmed
Fever (> 38° C)	Fever (> 38° C)	Lab results show one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Positive viral culture for A/H5 ■ Positive PCR for A/H5 ■ IFA Test positive for A/H5 ■ 4-fold rise in A/H5 in paired serum samples
Cough, sore throat and/or shortness of breath	Cough, sore throat and/or shortness of breath	
Lab test for influenza A OR Known contact with persons or animals sick with influenza A	In-country lab confirmation for influenza A/H5	

13 July

- Child has a preliminary diagnosis of clinical pneumonia
 - Presented to hospital on 9 July with fever, cough and diarrhea
 - Currently on a mechanical ventilator in the ICU
- Grandmother was at his bedside on 9 July when she also became ill. Admitted 10 July with fever and shortness of breath
- Grandmother is child's primary caretaker. Child's mother lives outside the province but arrived at hospital yesterday
- Grandfather, who lives with cases, denies symptoms
- Grandfather reports that the farmer had onset of fever and cough on same day as his grandson, but did not go to hospital

Grandmother's chest x-ray



Child's chest x-ray



Case Line List: 13 July

	Age	Sex	Case Status	Job	Symp-toms	Onset	Exposure	Status
1	5	M	Confirmed	Child	F, C, D	7 July	4 July	Critical
2	55	F	Probable	Caregiver of case 1	F, C, SOB	9 July	4 July?	Serious
3	48	M	Possible	Poultry farmer/ neighbor	F,C	7 July	Early July	Improving

15 July

- Case #1 dies. Lab results confirm H5N1
- H5 antibodies detected in case #2 specimen
- Contact interviews with healthcare workers at the hospital show 3 have been in contact with cases without PPE
- 1 of the 3 health workers is ill with fever and cough. Lab reports are pending



Case Line List: 15 July

	Age	Sex	Case Status	Job	Symp-toms	Onset	Exposure	Status
1	5	M	Confirmed	Child	F, C, D	7 July	4 July	Death- 15 July
2	55	F	Probable	Caregiver of case 1	F, C, SOB	9 July	4 July?	Serious
3	48	M	Possible	Poultry farmer/ neighbor	F,C	7 July	Early July	Improving
4	30	F	Probable	Physician	F, C	14 July	11 July	

16 July

- Labs return positive for case #3 (farmer) and #4 (physician)
- Surveillance locates 3 more cases
 - 13-year-old who lives 2 doors down from farmer had fever, cough, and diarrhea and died 12 July
 - 16-year-old farmer's apprentice with fever and cough is currently a patient at a village clinic
 - 82-year-old woman who lives next door to child and grandmother admitted to a hospital in a different province on 12 July

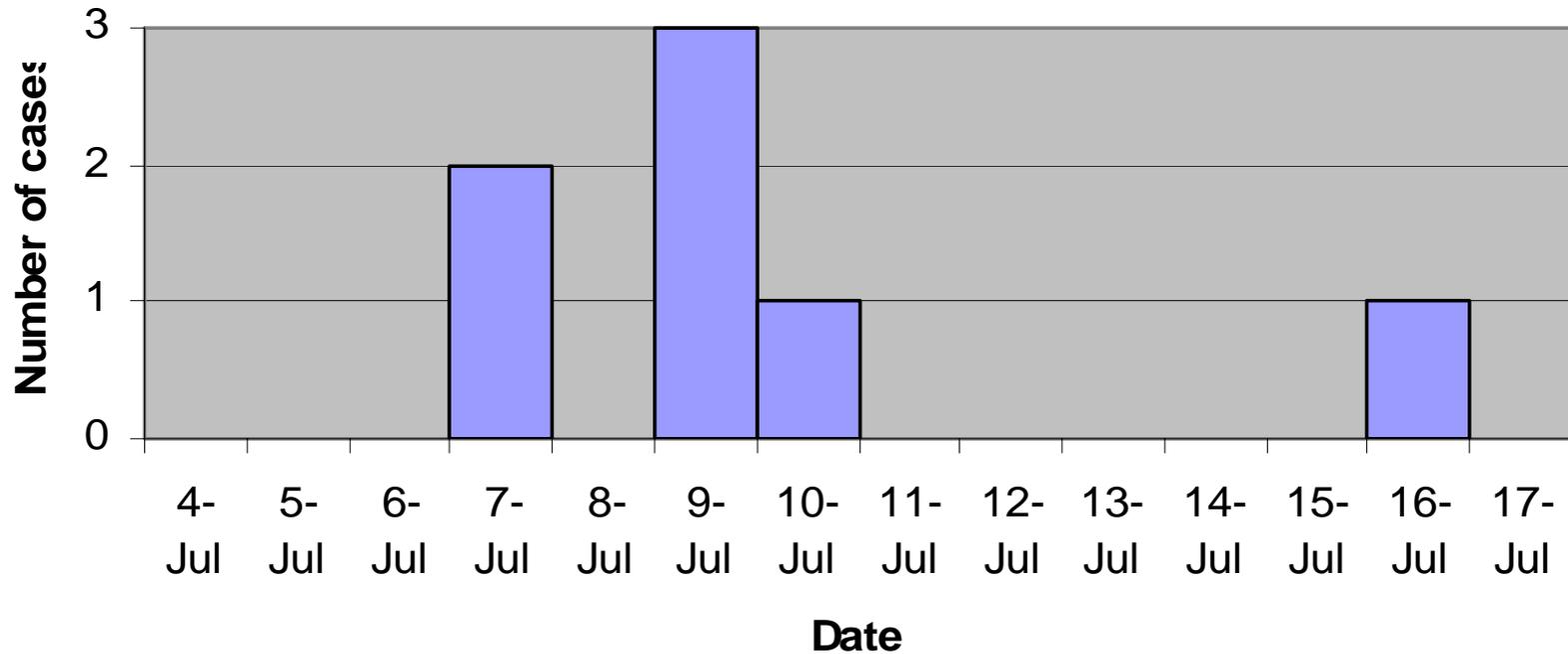
Case Line List: 18 July

	Age	Sex	Case Status	Job	Symp-toms	Onset	Exposure	Status
1	5	M	Confirmed	Child	F, C, D	7 July	4 July	Death-15 July
2	55	F	Probable	Caregiver of case 1	F, C, SOB	9 July	4 July?	Death-16 July
3	48	M	Possible	Poultry farmer/neighbor	F,C	7 July	Early July	Improved
4	30	F	Probable	Physician	F, C	16 July	11 July	Improved
5	13	F	Possible	Neighbor of case 3	C, F, D	9 July	?	Death-12 July
6	16	M	Possible	Farmer's apprentice	F, C	9 July	Early July	Death-17 July
7	82	F	Possible	Neighbor to case 1, 2	F, C, SOB	10 July	?	Death-17 July



Epidemic Curve for Pao Mai Outbreak

H5N1 Outbreak at Pao Mai, July 2006



Conclusions

1 September

- A human outbreak of avian influenza occurred
- The outbreak was associated with burial of dead chickens at a poultry farm
- 6 weeks have passed with no new cases
- 7 cases were identified
- 5 deaths; CFR = 0.71
- Outbreak ended due to thorough surveillance and use of prophylaxis



Discuss: Recommendations

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Break out sessions in three groups:

Group #1: prepare briefing note for Minister of Health

Group #2: Prepare a press release for the newspaper

Group #3: Prepare to communicate with the community

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Communicating with various audiences

- The content and format differ
- The process is identical
 - Define the audience
 - Understand the concern of the audience
 - Decide what you want as a result of the communication
 - Select the right media
 - Find the right tone
 - Adapt the content (e.g., language)

What if we communicate with nurses?

- Define the audience
 - Nursing association
- Understand the concern of the audience
 - Quality of care
- Decide what you want as a result of the communication
 - Endorse the new Standard Operating Practices
- Select the right media
 - Nurses association bulletin
- Find the right tone
 - “First do no harm” principles
- Adapt the content
 - Technical language

Overview of communication to various audiences

Audience	Medium	Focus of the content	Communication objective
Epidemiologist Laboratory	Report	Epidemiology	Documentation of the source
Public health managers	Abstract	Recommendations	Action
Political leaders	Briefing	Summary	Evidence that the situation is under control
Community	Press release, interview	Health education	Personal steps towards prevention
Scientific community	Presentation, manuscript	Science	Scientific progress



5 communication failures that kill operational success

- Mixed messages from multiple experts
- Information released late
- Paternalistic attitudes
- Not countering rumors and myths in real-time (as they come up)
- Public power struggles and confusion

5 communication steps that boost operational success

- Execute a solid communication plan
- Be the first source for information
- Express empathy early
- Show competence and expertise
- Remain honest and open

Take home messages

- Communication goes both ways
- Seek to understand before seeking to be understood