Disease Control in Humanitarian Emergencies

The WHO, Disease Control in Humanitarian Emergencies (DCE) aims to improve the surveillance and control of communicable disease in emergency settings. The activities are centered on three main areas of work:

- field epidemiology;
- training;
- publication of technical standards, guidelines and tools.

DCE collaborates with many departments at WHO Headquarters, Regional Offices and Country Offices, national authorities, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), United Nations agencies and other international organizations and institutions to help control communicable disease in emergencies.

DCE coordinates the WHO/HQ Communicable Diseases Working Group on Emergencies (CD-WGE), which includes WHO experts on relevant diseases (such as malaria, diarrhoeal diseases, measles, pneumonia), immunization, water and sanitation, child health, surveillance/early warning and outbreak response, vector control, nutrition, food safety, injuries/wounds. This working group provides the technical and operational backbone for DCE activities.

Course venues and frequency

The Communicable Diseases in Emergencies course takes place several times a year – in Geneva, London (in collaboration with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine), New York (in collaboration with the International Rescue Committee), and at venues in sub-Saharan Africa. Please visit the following website for details on upcoming courses.

www.who.int/diseasecontrol_emergencies/training

Selection

Based on their CV, participants are selected competitively. Post-graduate public health education is desirable although not compulsory. Some field experience in communicable disease control in emergencies is essential.

Accreditation

Certificates of attendance are provided to participants.

Applications

Applicants should send an email expressing interest with their CV to:

Disease Control in Humanitarian Emergencies (DCE) Health Security and Environment (HSE)
World Health Organization
cdemergencies@who.int

Further information

For further information about the work of DCE, including training opportunities, please send an email to cdemergencies@who.int

or visit our web site:

www.who.int/diseasecontrol_emergencies

Communicable Diseases in Emergencies

WHO training course for humanitarian agencies
Goal and target audience of the course

The Communicable Diseases in Emergencies course provides health coordinators/medical advisers working for NGOs, UN agencies, and international organizations working in emergencies with the necessary technical skills to develop and implement communicable disease surveillance and control activities.

Course objectives

On completion of the course, participants should be able to:

- conduct communicable disease risk assessments and prioritize interventions in emergencies;
- design and implement surveillance / early warning and response (EWAR) systems in collaboration with partners;
- conduct outbreak investigations and manage outbreak responses;
- implement prevention and control methods for priority communicable diseases in emergencies.

Teaching methods

Teaching is conducted through a mixture of lectures, case studies, group exercises, videos, discussions and practicals.

Facilitators

All our lecturers and facilitators are experts in their field and originate from WHO or other academic and technical institutions and agencies.

Programme outline

- Principles of infectious disease transmission
- Key indicators in emergencies
- Methods of data collection in emergencies
- Communicable diseases rapid assessment and prioritization of interventions
- Setting up early warning systems in emergencies including:
  - defining priority health events
  - applying case definitions
  - applying alert and epidemic thresholds for action and main indicators
  - establishing a rumor/alert notification and verification process
  - designing a data collection form
  - defining data reporting mechanisms and regularity
  - defining data analysis procedures and feedback
  - outlining laboratory needs, quality control and referral system
- Conducting outbreak investigations and managing outbreak responses including:
  - preparedness for outbreak-prone diseases
  - setting up an Outbreak Response Team with tasks and responsibilities
  - strengthening laboratory services, specimen collection and transport of samples
  - reinforcing infection control – setting up isolation facilities/universal precautions/personal protection
  - clinical management of patients
  - media and risk communication
  - social mobilization and health education
- Prevention and control of specific infectious diseases in emergency settings
  - malaria
  - acute respiratory infections / pneumonia
  - diarrhoeal diseases
  - tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS
  - vaccine-preventable diseases including measles and meningitis
  - pandemic influenza
- Water and sanitation
- Vector control

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