



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

INTERGOVERNMENTAL WORKING
GROUP ON REVISION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL HEALTH REGULATIONS
Second session
Agenda item 2

A/IHR/IGWG/2/INF.DOC./4
22 February 2005

Decision instrument for the assessment and notification of events that may constitute a public health emergency of international concern

Report of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Annex 2

1. Following the first session of the Intergovernmental Working Group, an ad hoc expert group with members nominated by Member States in each region was invited to review and to propose changes to Annex 2 of the Chair's proposed text.¹ The group met in Geneva on 17 and 18 February 2005 under the chairmanship of Dr P. Aavitsland, and with Dr A. Talisuna as Rapporteur. The list of members is attached as Annex 1. The group made the following proposals.

2. The decision instrument should be revised as follows (page numbers refer to the English version of Annex 2 of the Chair's proposed text):

- (a) change the title of the decision instrument (page 42) to: "Decision instrument for the assessment and notification of events that may constitute a public health emergency of international concern" by deleting the words "Part A" and the footnote;
- (b) replace the decision algorithm on page 42 with the version attached in Annex 2 to this document;
- (c) delete the first box on page 43 ("Does the event involve a notifiable disease?");
- (d) change the title of the second box on page 43 to "Does the event meet at least two of the following criteria?";
- (e) change the third example in section 4 (Part II, page 44) to read: "Occurrence of the event itself unusual for the area, season or population";
- (f) delete Part B (page 45);

3. A consolidated revision of the decision instrument is attached as Annex 2 of this document.

¹ Document A/IHR/IGWG/2/2.

4. WHO should develop guidelines for implementation and evaluation of the decision instrument after the revised International Health Regulations have been approved.
5. WHO should provide technical assistance to Member States to facilitate implementation of the decision instrument.
6. Validation and evaluation studies should be conducted periodically (every two to three years) by Member States as they implement the decision instrument. Results of such studies should be used for its revision.
7. WHO shall elaborate a procedure for periodic revision (every two to three years) of the decision instrument, especially the listed diseases, based on field evidence.
8. Linking the decision instrument to the national surveillance and response system and to the core capacity requirements for surveillance and response, set out in Annex 1 of the Chair's proposed text, is important for capacity strengthening and building.
9. Member States are encouraged to initiate the process for introducing the use of the decision instrument.

ANNEX 1

LIST OF MEMBERS

African Region

Dr Damase Bodzongo
Directeur général de la Santé
Ministère de la Santé et la Population
Congo

Dr Moussa Diakhate
Conseiller technique du Ministre de la Santé
Ministère de la Santé
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Assistant Commissioner, Department of Health Services Epidemiological Surveillance Unit
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Mr Fordson Nyirenda
Environmental Health Specialist
Central Board of Health
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Region of the Americas

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Dr Stephen Ostroff
Assistant Surgeon General
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United States of America

South-East Asia Region

Dr Shiv Lal
Additional Director-General cum Director
National Institute of Communicable Diseases
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Dr Indriyono Tantoro
Secretary
Director General of Communicable Disease Control and Environmental Health
Ministry of Health
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Dr B.R. Marasini
Deputy Health Administrator
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Nepal

European Region

Dr Preben Aavitsland (Chair)
Division for Infectious Disease Control
Norwegian Institute of Public Health
Norway

Dr Jean-Claude Desenclos
Responsable du Département des maladies infectieuses
Département des maladies infectieuses
Institut de Veille Sanitaire
France

Mr Yuri M. Fedorov¹
Unit Chief
Department of Sanitary and Epidemiological Surveillance
Ministry of Health and Medical Industry
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Professor Johan Giesecke
Swedish Institute for Infectious Disease Control
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¹ Unable to attend.

Eastern Mediterranean Region

Dr A. Belbeisi
Director, Disease Control and Prevention
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Dr M.H. Al Jeffri
Director General for Control of Infectious and Parasitic Diseases
Ministry of Health
Saudi Arabia

Dr A.A. Al-Kohlani
Ministry of Public Health and Population
Yemen

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Interim Director
Disease Control Department
Ministry of Health
United Arab Emirates

Western Pacific Region

Mr Andrew Forsyth
Team Leader, Public Health Legislation Review
Public Health Directorate
Ministry of Health
New Zealand

Mr Li Zhengmao
Section Chief, Health Emergency Office
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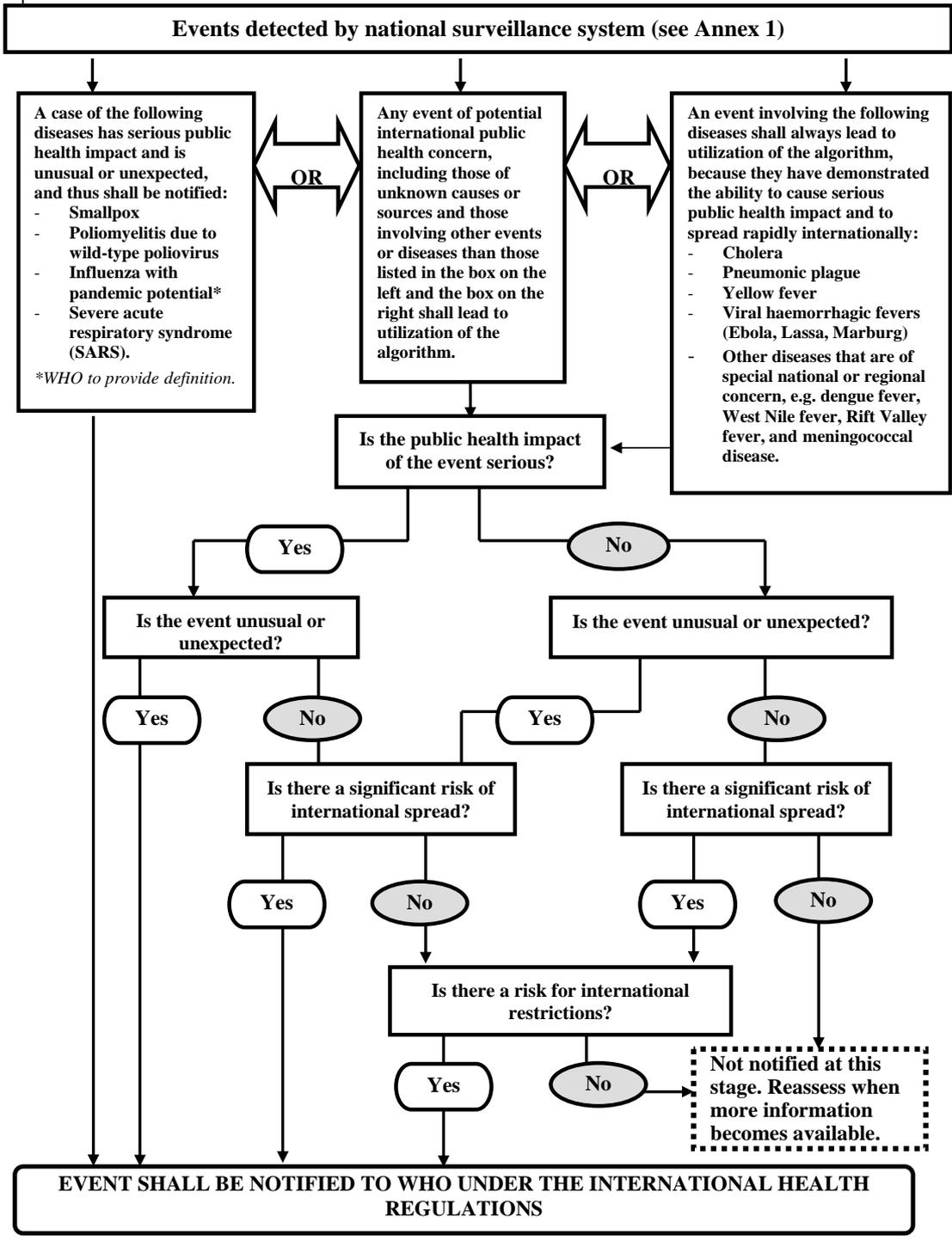
Dr Kiyosu Taniguchi
Chief, Section of Intelligence and Policies Planning Infectious Disease Surveillance
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Japan

¹ Unable to attend

ANNEX 2

DECISION INSTRUMENT FOR THE ASSESSMENT AND NOTIFICATION OF EVENTS THAT MAY CONSTITUTE A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY OF INTERNATIONAL CONCERN

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DOES THE EVENT MEET AT LEAST TWO OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA?

Is the public health impact of the event serious?	I. Is the public health impact of the event serious?
	1. <i>Is the number of cases and/or number of deaths for this type of event large for the given place and time?</i>
	2. <i>Has the event the potential to have a high public health impact?</i> THE FOLLOWING ARE EXAMPLES OF CIRCUMSTANCES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO HIGH PUBLIC HEALTH IMPACT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Event caused by a pathogen with high potential to cause epidemic (infectiousness of the agent, high case fatality, multiple transmission routes or healthy carrier). ✓ Indication of treatment failure (new or emerging antibiotic resistance, vaccine failure, antidote resistance or failure). ✓ Event represents a significant public health threat even if no or very few human cases have yet been identified. ✓ Cases reported among health staff. ✓ The population at risk is especially vulnerable (refugees, low level of immunization, children, elderly, low immunity, undernourished, etc.). ✓ Concomitant factors that may hinder or delay the response (natural catastrophes, armed conflicts, unfavourable weather conditions, multiple foci in the country). ✓ Event in an area with high population density. ✓ Release into the environment of a chemical or radionuclear agent that has contaminated or has the potential to contaminate a population and/or a large geographical area.
	3. <i>Is external assistance needed to detect, investigate, respond and control the current event, or prevent new cases?</i> THE FOLLOWING ARE EXAMPLES OF WHEN ASSISTANCE MAY BE REQUIRED: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Inadequate human, financial, material or technical resources – in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Insufficient laboratory or epidemiological capacity to investigate the event (equipment, personnel, financial resources) – Insufficient antidotes, drugs and/or vaccine and/or protective equipment, decontamination equipment, or supportive equipment to cover estimated needs – Existing surveillance system is inadequate to detect new cases.
IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH IMPACT OF THE EVENT SERIOUS? Answer “yes” if you have answered “yes” to questions 1, 2 or 3 above.	

II. Is the event unusual or unexpected?	
Is the event unusual or unexpected?	<p>4. <i>Is the event unusual?</i></p> <p>THE FOLLOWING ARE EXAMPLES OF UNUSUAL EVENTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The event is caused by an unknown agent (biological, chemical or radionuclear) or the source, vehicle, route of transmission is unusual or unknown. ✓ Evolution of cases more severe than expected (including case-fatality) or with unusual symptoms. ✓ Occurrence of the event itself unusual for the area, season or population.
	<p>5. <i>Is the event unexpected?</i></p> <p>THE FOLLOWING ARE EXAMPLES OF UNEXPECTED EVENTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Event caused by a disease/agent that had already been eliminated or eradicated from the country or not previously reported, or chemical that has been nationally/internationally banned or restricted. ✓ Is the event known or suspected to be the result of an intentional or accidental release of chemical, radionuclear or biological agent?
	<p style="text-align: center;">IS THE EVENT UNUSUAL OR UNEXPECTED?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Answer “yes” if you have answered “yes” to questions 4 or 5 above.</p>

III. Is there a significant risk of international spread?	
Is there a significant risk of international spread?	<p>6. <i>Is there evidence of an epidemiological link to similar events in other countries?</i></p>
	<p>7. <i>Is there any factor that should alert us to the potential for cross border movement of the agent, vehicle or host?</i></p> <p>THE FOLLOWING ARE EXAMPLES OF CIRCUMSTANCES THAT MAY PREDISPOSE TO INTERNATIONAL SPREAD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Where there is evidence of local spread, an index case (or other linked cases): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – with history of international travel within the previous month (or time equivalent to the incubation period if the pathogen is known) – with history of participation in an international gathering (pilgrimage, sports event, conferences, etc.) – with close contact with an international traveller or a highly mobile population. ✓ Event caused by release into the environment e.g. air, water, that has the potential to spread across international borders. ✓ Event in an area of intense international traffic with limited capacity for sanitary control or environmental detection or decontamination.
	<p style="text-align: center;">IS THERE A SIGNIFICANT RISK OF INTERNATIONAL SPREAD?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Answer “yes” if you have answered “yes” to questions 6 or 7 above.</p>

	IV. Is there a significant risk of international travel or trade restrictions?
Risk of international restrictions ?	8. <i>Have similar events in the past resulted in international restriction on trade and/or travel against the affected country?</i>
	9. <i>Is the source suspected or known to be a food product, water or any other goods that might be contaminated that has been exported/imported to/from other countries?</i>
	10. <i>Has the event occurred in association with an international gathering or in an area of intense international tourism?</i>
	11. <i>Has the event caused requests for more information by foreign officials or international media?</i>
	IS THERE A SIGNIFICANT RISK OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE OR TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS? Answer “yes” if you have answered “yes” to questions 8, 9, 10 or 11 above.

States Parties that answer “yes” to the question whether the event meets any two of the four criteria (I-IV) above, shall notify WHO under Article 5 of the International Health Regulations.

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