

Risk Communication

Scaling Up/Down of Infection Control

National Center for Global Health and Medicine

Narumi Hori

Infectious Diseases: Purpose of Communication

- 1) To prevent an epidemic
- 2) To detect the early signs of an epidemic
- 3) To understand the state of an epidemic
- 4) To take measures quickly
- 5) To minimize fear and anger
- 6) To prevent misunderstanding and bias
- 7) To maintain the level of medical safety (prevention of secondary infections)
- 8) To quickly return to normal

Without a communication strategy

- It would bring more negative consequences

Lack of knowledge/fear/anxiety

Agitation by mass media

→ Anger

- Declined safety level

Occurrence of mistakes and incidents

→ Secondary infections

Communication Strategy

- 1) Decide the persons who will take the initiative/actions

Example:

Adopt a weekly “rotation (on-call)” schedule. If you are on call, you should be able to return to the hospital within one hour regardless of where you are.

Take the first shift to care for the patients.

Communication Strategy

2) Prepare an emergency message in advance for hospital staff and patients/
family/community/mass media

Example:

Prepare a poster for display

Decide in advance where to post a notice on the website

Communication Strategy

3) Protect patients/families

Example:

Protection of private information

Who can access medical records?

It's crucial to abide by the rules even during normal times.

Communication Strategy

4) Protect hospital staff (so that they feel their safety is assured by the organization)

Example:

Provide drills during normal times

Support health management

Provide a comfortable environment including meals/accommodation during work

Communication Strategy

5) Protect the organization

Example:

Provide drills during normal times

Support health management

Provide a comfortable environment including meals/accommodation during work

Communication Strategy

6) Protect the organization

Example:

Reduce the effect on other medical services

Prevent reputational damage

PR is necessary to let the public know that the hospital has the expertise to;

“provide adequate medical care” and,

“prevent the spread of infection”

Communication to return to normal

Announcement of the end of any “special measures”

- To hospital staff

- To patients/families

- To the community

- To the press

Provide a sense of security that the medical institution will continue its surveillance to ensure prevention/early action