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Implementing Nationwide Preparedness and Response Action plan for the Containment of the Corona Virus Disease 2019 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The ongoing global Corona Virus Disease-2019 (COVID-19) outbreak has become one of the biggest public health concerns of infectious origin affecting the entire world. Acknowledging the magnitude of the disease, rapid rise in the number of cases and geographical distribution, it is the need of the hour to strengthen preparedness activities and response action plan. In these emergency times, it is important to realize that not the health sector alone cannot make a difference unless other concerned sectors join hands together and work in a concerted and coordinated manner. The planned measures should also simultaneously target the strengthening of the case detection, prompt isolation, contact tracing, facilities for quarantine, and provision of appropriate care to the confirmed cases of the disease. In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic is increasing at a rapid pace with each day and this clearly highlights the fact that the preparedness and response activities need to be strengthened immensely. However, the success of the implemented measures and the eventual magnitude of the disease will be determined by the adoption of a multi-sectoral approach.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, quarantine, World Health Organization

INTRODUCTION

The ongoing global Corona Virus Disease-2019 (COVID-19) outbreak has become one of the biggest public health concerns of infectious origin affecting the entire world.^[1–3] The available estimates suggest that a total of 2314621 cases and 157847 deaths have been attributed to the infection.^[1] However, the alarming thing is the number of new cases that are being reported each day, as 72846 cases were reported within a span of 24 hours.^[1] The disease has a case fatality rate of 6.8% and the disease has been reported in 213 nations and territories across the world.^[1]

Strengthening Preparedness Activities

Acknowledging the magnitude of the disease, rapid rise in the number of cases and geographical distribution, it is the need of the hour to strengthen preparedness activities and response action plan.^[2,3] In fact, the disease outbreak exposed our weaknesses in our preparedness and even raised questions about our response action plan, as the disease was detected

in January month and there was a definite threat of the international spread; still we have fallen short in our efforts to effectively contain the infection.^[2] Although the causative virus is novel and still many things pertaining to the epidemiological and clinical attributes are not conclusive; nevertheless, the evidence is available to help the nations plan out their action plan, and yet we have failed to do so.^[2-4]

The Necessity of a Multi-sectoral Response

In these emergency times, it is important to realize that not the health sector alone cannot make a difference unless other concerned sectors (viz. travel, education, tourism and environment) join hands together and work in a concerted and coordinated manner.^[3,4] Further, the national authorities should foster a strong liaison with key agencies and formulate a nation-specific operational plan, and should also include resource assessment.^[2] This should go hand-in-hand with the capacity assessment, risk analysis and establishment of surveillance mechanisms, monitoring and evaluation systems.^[3] Moreover, emergency response teams should be created, which can be deployed wherever cases are reported, based on the availability of resources.^[3] In addition, to improve risk communication, a person can be designated and trained to deliver trustworthy information to the masses and health workers.^[2]

The planned measures should also simultaneously target the strengthening of the case detection, prompt isolation, contact tracing, facilities for quarantine, and provision of appropriate care to the confirmed cases of the disease.^[3-5] In addition, there is a definitive need to evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented measures periodically to eventually decide about their strengthening or modifications based on the evaluation results.^[2] The preparedness and response action plan should be implemented across the nation, and also the impact produced by them should be re-visited for responding to any future outbreaks of the diseases arising from a similar origin.^[2,3]

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic is increasing at a rapid pace with each day, and this clearly highlights that the preparedness and response activities need to be strengthened immensely. However, the success of the implemented measures and the eventual magnitude of the disease will be determined by the adoption of a multi-sectoral approach.

Disclosures

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