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Emergency Response Preparedness in Hospital Authority

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Introduction

Disasters are increasing in number and severity across the world. In a densely populated city like Hong Kong, it is critical for the Hospital Authority (HA) to be well prepared for a spectrum of unforeseen incidents. In recent years, HA organized and involved in various corporate-wide exercises in order to examine and enhance the existing contingency plans. All staff was also encouraged to participate to raise their awareness for emergency response preparedness (ERP).

Objectives

This study aimed at reviewing the characteristics of drills in which HA was involved in the past 3 years in order to evaluate the effectiveness of drills, thus enhance further development in ERP.

Methodology

A retrospective stock-take was performed on drills conducted between January 2013 and December 2015. Statistical data including the number of 1) drills in different natures; 2) involved organizations; 3) participated HA staff and hospitals were retrieved from exercise papers, attendance records of drills and other related documents. The variation of data from this period was investigated.

Result

Between 2013 and 2015, 38 drills with 25 (66%) ground deployment exercises and 13 (34%) table-top exercises were performed. By December 2015, the total number of drills which HA was involved increased by 29%. The majority were related to Mass Casualty Incident including fire disasters, road traffic accident and aircraft crash accident. Some were related to infection diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, Ebola virus disease, and avian flu. HA collaborated with over a hundred organizations for these drills. The number of departments and hospitals involved increased by 150% and 13% respectively during the same period. In addition, the number of participated HA staff also increased by 15%. **Conclusions:** According to The Federal Emergency Management Agency, preparedness in the 21st

century requires the capability to deal with all types of threats and hazards. In the past few years, Hospital Authority Head Office, Major Incident Control Centre (HAHO MICC) conducted drills and exercises to enhance healthcare workers' awareness, readiness, knowledge and skills in emergency response for any unforeseen events. Staff awareness as well as coordination between departments and organizations were also strengthened. In the future, HAHO MICC will look to expand the scope and to improve the authenticity of drills in response to the increasing number of mega-disasters over the world. The importance of establishing an exercises planning team should also be stressed and considered.