Measures against pandemic (H1N1) 2009 in the Japanese workplace: Follow-up surveys in large-scale enterprises

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Background

Pandemic (H1N1) 2009

About Pandemic (H1N1) 2009

• Began in March 2009; spread globally and continued until August 2010
• Global infection rate of 11% to 21%

Pathogenicity
• Mild/Like a seasonal flu
• But severe illness and death in some cases, particularly in more vulnerable groups

Objective

Pandemic (H1N1) 2009

Follow-up Surveys
We surveyed the same 18 enterprises by questionnaire

We asked the enterprises:
1. What had their solutions to the issue been and what new problems had arisen since the previous research?
2. What would they do for a future high-pathogenicity avian flu?

Methods

Subject:
• 18 large-scale Japanese enterprises

Content:
(1) Assessments of measures against pandemic (H1N1) 2009
(2) Examples of BCP revisions and amended measures
(3) Problems and requests in the post-pandemic period
(4) Preparations for the next pandemic

Period:
• November to December 2010
Results

- Revised BCPs to enhance usefulness at any pathogenicity level.
- Assessed measures as high quality.
- However, many enterprises reflected measures that were excessive under the assumption of only high-pathogenicity avian influenza.

- Nos. 3-5 are included in the BCP.
- Many enterprises only changed the BCP framework but not the details.
- Just reconfirmed the roles of members.
- Considered that their information rules worked effectively.
- Some enterprises were confronted with problems when they couldn't build an integrated worldwide system that included foreign factories and subsidiaries.

- Some enterprises (1) improved their administration methods for needed supplies, (2) increased amounts stocked, and (3) revised standards for all pathogenicity levels.
- Cancellations were decided by crisis management units.
- But there were no clear criteria for cancellations and deregulations — each enterprise had to develop original criteria.

- Enterprises that deal in public services (e.g., gas, oil, and electricity) already had adequate supply chain management and connections.
- But other enterprises thought that their supply chain was too wide to manage.

- Enterprises in the utilities industry (e.g., gas, oil, electricity) already had adequate guidelines.
- Much of this guidance was about how to prepare a BCP and manuals for preventing the spread of infection.

- Many enterprises also provided education via the company network after the pandemic period, because workers have less motivation for infection prevention in the post-pandemic period.

Discussions

This survey revealed the current status and problems of pandemic preparation in the post-pandemic period in large-scale Japanese enterprises.

Problems
- Couldn't construct a worldwide system including foreign factories and subsidiary companies.
- No clear criteria for cancellations and deregulations.
- Supply chains are too wide to manage.
- Workers have less motivation for infection prevention after the pandemic period.

Solutions
- Provision of information on the infection situation in other nations.
- Speedy provision of useful information such as virus type, pathogen, and cancellation point of anti-pandemic measures.
- Provision of guidance for supply chain management (e.g., range of cooperation of other companies, range of field).
- Continuing education of workers to bolster their motivation.
Conclusions

- Many large-scale Japanese enterprises have revised or are revising their BCPs to enhance their usefulness at any pathogenicity level in the post-pandemic period.
- But they have still not resolved issues with information collection and information provision from government.
- Nations, industrial associations, and enterprises should correct each deficiency and improve measures against future high-pathogenicity avian flu.

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