



Article Title

Initial impacts of global risk mitigation measures taken during the combatting of the COVID-19 pandemic

Citation

By Bruinen de Bruin, Yuri; Lequarre, Anne-Sophie; McCourt, Josephine; Clevestig, Peter; Pigazzani, Filippo; Zare Jeddi, Maryam; Colosio, Claudio; Goulart, Margarida. In Safety Science. August 2020 128 Language: English. DOI: 10.1016/j.ssci.2020.104773, Database: ScienceDirect

Abstract

This paper presents an analysis of risk mitigation measures taken by countries around the world facing the current COVID-19 outbreak. In light of the current pandemic the authors collated and clustered (using harmonised terminology) the risk mitigation measures taken around the globe in the combat to contain, and since March 11, 2020, to limit the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus known to cause the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). This overview gathers lessons learnt, providing an update on the current knowledge for authorities, sectors and first responders on the effectiveness of said measures, and may allow enhanced prevention, preparedness and response for future outbreaks. Various measures such as mobility restrictions, physical distancing, hygienic measures, socio-economic restrictions, communication and international support mechanisms have been clustered and are reviewed in terms of the nature of the actions taken and their qualitative early-perceived impact. At the time of writing, it is still too premature to express the quantitative effectiveness of each risk mitigation cluster, but it seems that the best mitigation results are reported when applying a combination of voluntary and enforceable measures.

Summary

COVID-19 demonstrates the weaknesses of the current systems; the world was insufficiently prepared, scientific warnings were not picked up quickly enough, there were confusing messages and trust building took too much time. Specifically, many countries started with processes such as understanding the problem from the beginning and not building upon existing knowledge and best practices of other countries. This led to similar outcomes such as disbelief, underestimation of the scale and potential danger and losing valuable time in jointly implementing the best risk mitigation practices. Besides the differences between countries in terms of cultures or economic prosperity, this pandemic demonstrates the unpreparedness of many health systems lacking

mechanisms and materials to adequately respond to a quickly spreading infection, relying on societal and economic improvisation.