



Article Title

Comparison of Measures adopted to combat COVID 19 Pandemic by different countries in WHO regions.

Citation

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Abstract

Since the emergence of Corona Virus Disease 19 (COVID 19) in China in December 2019, a lot of significant decisions have been taken by the World Health Organization (WHO) and several countries across the globe. As the world reels under the threat of rapid increase in the number of cases and is planning strategies with the limited information available on the virus, it is essential to learn from the experience of countries across the globe. Hence, we selected a few countries in five WHO regions based on their COVID 19 caseload, management strategies and outcome and compared some of the important measures taken by them to contain the spread of infection. Strategies like extensive testing and contact tracing, strict quarantine and isolation measures, Hospital preparedness, complete restriction of non-essential travel, strict border control measures and social distancing measures play a vital role in containment of the spread. All the countries faced the novel strain of virus and implemented similar strategies as per the guidance of WHO, but the extent of preparedness, swiftness with which the decisions were made and the scale of measures made the difference.

Summary

Lessons Learnt and Conclusion

1. Acting Early: As the pandemic is starting as small outbreaks but intensifying exponentially it is necessary to initiate action when the threat appears small. Decisions on reporting, travel restrictions, ban on mass/religious gatherings should be taken early. Eg. KSA, Germany.
2. Epidemiological investigations, contact tracing and containment measures: Countries with extensive testing and contact tracing like China, Singapore, South Korea and Germany showed better outcomes than countries with limited testing like Italy.

3. Hospital Preparedness: Enhancing testing capacity, manpower training and increase in hospital resources like isolation wards, ICU and Ventilator as done by countries like Germany which have a low CFR, Singapore and China.
4. Monitoring and reporting: Essential to have a data documentation and dissemination process to plan the resources wisely and provide right information to people. Ex. Singapore, China.
5. Low cost innovations in patient testing and treatment: Eg. Srilanka.
6. Safety of health care staff: Not Testing the health care staff on priority and shortage of PPE lead to nosocomial infections and deaths among Doctors as in Italy.
7. Stringent Social Distancing measures: Total lockdown has better outcomes than phase wise lockdown as observed in KSA in comparison with Iran.
8. A prior experience of dealing with pandemic enables better preparedness and outcomes. E.g. Singapore and KSA.