

Expert Meeting on the Novel Coronavirus Disease Control

Analysis and Recommendations of the Response to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) (April 22, 2020) (Summary)

I. Introduction (omitted)

II. Current situation and problems

1. Current situation in Japan

- Number of newly confirmed patients is more than 400 per day. The cumulative total of infections is over 10,000. Increase in the Prefectures under Specific Cautions make up more than 70 percent of the total increase. In Tokyo and Osaka, the number of patients with unidentified route (link) of transmission is approximately 80 percent.
- The number of infections is also increasing in the other 34 prefectures, with outbreaks occurring due to people moving to and from metropolitan areas, including Tokyo.
- The percentage of cases believed to be caused by infection overseas decreased.
- Cumulative deaths in Japan is few compared to other countries, but is increasing.

2. State of behavior modification

(1) Reducing contact among people by 80% under the declaration of a state of emergency

- The goal of reducing person-to-person contact by 80 percent is needed not only for reducing secondary infections, but also for reducing the number of infections sufficiently in a short period of time.
- We plan to use two indicators for assessment. First, location information from mobile phones and public transportation use are utilized to assess the decrease in population size in urban and other areas. As a result, we observed more cases on weekdays (compared to weekends) where population reduction was insufficient, and by region, reduction was less sufficient in rural areas than in urban areas.

NTT DOCOMO data	Weekdays: down by 63.6-65.2% Holidays: down by 77.6 to 77.8% * One week from April 13 (Mon) to April 19 (Sun); reduction rate during daytime around Shibuya station compared to the baseline (average value) from January to February.
Softbank data (Agoop)	April 18 (Sun): down by 68.9-87.3% * Population reduction at major stations (Tokyo, Shimbashi, Shinjuku, Shinagawa, Roppongi) in Tokyo on April 18 (Sun).

Ridership (number of people passing through the ticket gates) of Toei Subway, Bureau of Transportation Tokyo Metropolitan Government	April 8 (Wed) to 10 (Fri): 67-74% April 11 (Sat) to 12 (Sun): 84-89% * Reduction rate of ridership compared to same days of the previous year.
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- Second is the number of contacts per hour, and we have begun examining ways to quantify this.
- (2) Problems surrounding reducing contact and teleworking
- Efforts towards teleworking are not necessarily making sufficient progress.
 - With Golden Week coming up, there is strong concern over the infection spreading nationwide due to the movement of people.
 - Infection prevention measures are needed in places where many people gather on weekends such as parks and supermarkets.
- (3) Prejudice and discrimination
- Prejudice and discrimination can cause infected persons and their families excessive anxiety and fear, as well as making them hesitate about coming forward about infection, which can lead to the further spread of infection. It can also lower the motivation of medical and welfare workers and lead to extremely serious problems such as the health care system collapsing and distribution stopping.

3. Current situation and problems surrounding health care

(1) Medical service systems

- With the infection spreading nationwide, the medical field is becoming severely stretched. The increased acceptance of patients with no or mild symptoms being in their homes, hotels, etc., the promotion of the designation of priority medical institutions for patients with symptoms that are moderate or worse requiring hospitalization, the organization of the hospital bed information that is required for coordinating acceptance of patients, and the securing of expert resources and personal protective equipment (PPE) are needed.
- Mass infection in medical institutions and welfare facilities is continuing to occur and its prevention is a pressing need.

(2) PCR and other tests

- It is important that such tests are performed promptly for those who need it at the discretion of doctors, but while the need for testing is increasing there is an absolute shortage of manpower. Medical resources are also stretched and lacking.

(3) Surveillance

- Due to a lack of serum antibody testing that can be widely utilized, regional infection status cannot be accurately grasped.

(4) Development of medication

- Antiviral drugs or vaccinations do not exist at this point, nor is there an established treatment method at the moment, but medications that are expected to be effective are being used with patient consent.

(5) Sharing awareness with citizens regarding the importance of health care

- Combination of factors such as a decrease in medical workers due to infection in medical institutions, prejudice and discrimination against medical workers and their families, and worsening financial conditions can result in a situation where proper health care is not being provided. Such a situation must be avoided.

4. Current situation and problems surrounding public health center operations and border control measures

(1) Current situation in public health centers

- The workload in these sites is tremendous, as is the exhaustion it is causing. The further addition of personnel, outsourcing of operations, load reduction through simplification, and supplementation for expenses for the above are essential.

(2) Current situation and problems surrounding border control measures

- The percentage of positive PCR or other testing results at airport quarantine has been decreasing since April and is now down to 0.26%.
- With the declaration of a state of emergency in Japan and the increase in PCR and other tests in demand, some point out that we need to examine if resources are being provided efficiently.

III. Recommendations

1. Thorough behavior modification

(1) Reducing contact among people by 80% under the declaration of a state of emergency

- Movement of people has reduced greatly, but the achievement of the goal of 80% reduction in contact has not been observed. We need to strengthen our efforts.

(2) Measures for reducing contact and teleworking

- Even when reduction in infection is expected, there is a possibility of continued requests to refrain from going to high risk environments that are closed, crowded and where people are in close contact or events involving movement between areas of the nation.
- Use extreme caution and measures when coming in contact with the elderly.
- Promote efforts in the workplace such as teleworking and staggering commuting hours. Such efforts promote not only disease control, but also work style reform.

- Widely announce and publicize specific measures for reducing contact. (See the attached material)
- Risk measures for parks and supermarkets
- Importance of utilizing ICT to create an environment for children to learn at home.

(3) Measures during Golden Week

- We ask that people strictly avoid going to crowded places where they will be exposed to the risk of contact. People visiting their hometowns involves the long distance movement of people as well as contact with elderly people, who are at high risk of developing severe symptoms, and this must be prioritized when sending out messages.

(4) Eliminating prejudice and discrimination

- Prejudice and discrimination against infectious diseases, in particular, prejudice and discrimination against people such as medical and welfare workers who support our society, are absolutely not acceptable.
- We must spread awareness among citizens to prevent prejudice and discrimination.

2. Future of the medical service system

(1) Sharing of roles among medical institutions, and securing of hospital beds and lodging facilities

- Set up "priority medical institutions" in all prefectures that focus on accepting severe and mild patients. Additionally, the development of human resources who can provide intensive care for severe patients is of utmost importance.
- For the recuperation of patients with no or mild symptoms, facilities such as hotels must be secured and prepared specifically and promptly.
- Each prefecture must set up a system for coordinating the smooth transfer of patients, including support for medical institutions examining patients and the visualization of patient transfer, acceptance coordination and hospital bed availability.
- Infection control must be implemented thoroughly to prevent infection in medical institutions. For this purpose, set up a system for proper PCR and other testing.

(2) Expansion of PCR and other testing system

- Promote the further utilization of private testing institutes. Enhance the outpatient service system by installing large tents and prefabricated buildings and setting up local outpatient/testing centers.
- When doctors suspect that there is an infection and acknowledges that testing is needed, testing is to be promptly performed.

(3) Further demonstration of leadership by the governors or other persons in each prefecture

- Governors and others in each prefecture shall demonstrate more leadership than they have previously regarding the promotion of sharing of roles among medical institutions, enhancement of PCR and other testing systems, the enhancement of public health center systems, the streamlining of operations, coordination with related agencies, etc. Such persons will also strengthen coordination regarding the sharing of infection status.

(4) Securing equipment for infection protection, test reagents, sample collection swabs, etc.

- The government will make every effort to secure medical resources in a stable manner as well as ensuring their proper distribution.
- (5) Expansion of surveillance
 - Promote research regarding the prevalence of antibodies.
- (6) Development of medication, etc.
 - Accelerate the collection of evidence through observation, research, clinical trials, etc. to obtain pharmaceutical approval as soon as possible.
- (7) Measures during Golden Week
 - Prepare and develop a medical service/treatment system in advance for novel coronavirus patients during Golden Week.
- (8) Share awareness with citizens regarding importance of health care
 - To eliminate prejudice and discrimination against medical workers and their families, widely spread correct knowledge among citizens about this infectious disease.

3. Future of public health center support and border control measures

- (1) Enhancement of public health center system and streamlining of its operations
 - Secure human resources to enhance the public health center system. Reduce the load on public health centers regarding the transferring of patients, the sorting of patients who tested positive, and transportation of samples by utilizing private organizations, etc.
 - In areas where the number of infected patients whose route of transmission is unknown is increasing, it is not realistic to perform active epidemiological investigation, including behavior history investigations, on every positive patient. Thus, efficient measures must be implemented in accordance with the situation in each region, such as measures with regard to confirmed clusters, the detection of infections in medical institutions/facilities, and response to mega clusters.
- (2) Future of border control measures
 - For the efficient and effective use of resources needed for PCR and other tests, implement more efficient and effective border control measures including the option of limiting the scope of testing to symptomatic cases only.