

has required all National Health Services (NHS) organizations to prepare contingency plans for pandemic flu.³

Presentation: The presentation will describe the steps taken to improve preparedness across organizations in the Avon area, including issues such as the availability of anti-virals, face masks, and protective equipment. New integrated command and control arrangements will be described alongside the likely challenges to service continuity and new processes developed to assist in managing the consequences of pandemic flu.

The presentation will highlight the utility of service continuity planning as a foundation for robust emergency management arrangements for pandemic flu and other emergencies.

Principle Messages: Pandemic Influenza presents considerable business continuity challenges for the NHS. Planning and Preparedness for pandemic flu will provide a robust platform for the NHS response to other emergencies, including bio-terrorism. Everyone must take part in preparedness for pandemic influenza and business continuity planning.

References:

1. Cabinet Office (2006), Contingency Planning for a Possible Influenza Pandemic, Cabinet Office, London.
2. Department of Health. (2005), Explaining Pandemic Flu: A Guide from the Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health, London.
3. UK Health Departments. (2005) UK Health Departments' Influenza Contingency Plan, Department of Health, London.

Keywords: health service planning; National Health Services; pandemic influenza; preparedness

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(227) Potential Avian Flu Pandemic: National Understanding of Paramedic Attitudes and Concerns, and Innovative EMS-based Surveillance and Triage Strategies

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The Australian National Health and Medical Research Council funded this project to study and inform national policy-makers on avian flu. An experienced team of investigators from three universities, one international expert and associate investigators from each Australian state ambulance authority, led the project.

A national survey the attitudes and concerns of Australian paramedics comprised a stratified sample of 3,000 paramedics and their life partners, and included focus groups/interviews in each state.

The next component examined the use of the Medical Priority Dispatch system as a surveillance tool at the point of call-taking. Investigators compared these data with existing surveillance data on influenza-like-illness (ILI) in medical locum services, sentinel general practices, and emergency departments, hospital inpatients, and laboratory results, in two Australian states.

The community-based triage for ILI in the EMS component adapted the population-based triage model for community bio-events, developed by Skip Burkle, for use as a triage tool

in a potential avian flu pandemic. This study's implications for national and state "pandemic flu" planning will be discussed.

Keywords: attitudes; Medical Priority Dispatch; model surveillance; pandemic flu; paramedics

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(228) Urbanization: Threats and Opportunity—Ankara, Athens, and Istanbul

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Urban population continues to grow at a faster rate than the world population. Three billion people, or about one half of all human beings, live in urban settlements, of which about 5% live in mega-cities. This trend is expected to continue (five billion by 2030). Athens, Istanbul, and Ankara demonstrate a different evolution to their current state. While urbanization and industrialization in Athens (four million) and the southern part of Istanbul (11 million) have had a negative effect on regional cooling, Ankara (four million) does not show any warming trend in spite of its urban geometry. All three systems produce considerable pollution from the heating of buildings, transportation and factories, and present significant health challenges. There is a significant potential for progress with opportunity as well as threats resulting from poor governance, organizational dysfunction, and creeping or sudden disasters. The problem space designated "urbanization" of all three cities will be treated as a system with an emphasis on attributes of failure and the need to offset it, as well as the potential for calamity and its health consequences. This preliminary work is conducted within the framework of Greek-Turkish collaboration funded by the Greek authorities.

Keywords: Ankara; Athens; Istanbul; threats; urbanization

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(229) Simulating the Effect of Pandemic Influenza on the Healthcare System Using Desktop Technology

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This presentation describes a simulation system that models the healthcare system's response to pandemic influenza. It assists public health decision-makers to develop response plans and procedures, and to optimize resource placement.

The simulation combines a geospatial epidemiology model with public health and healthcare system resources. It is run on a high-powered, desk top computer by a user with basic computing skills and analytical capabilities. Someone who is comfortable with Excel has the level of analytical capabilities required.

Using this system, public health personnel can determine which resource acquisition and deployment decisions will maximize the percentage of patients who receive the appropriate level of care within an appropriate timeframe. The system focuses on regional management of healthcare resources.