Communication

HEALTH RISKS AND EMERGENCIES

The Netherlands
Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

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Recent Health Risks

- Query Fever
- Schmallenberg Virus
- EHEC
- Fukushima
- A H1N1
- ESBL
Headlines

- A changing world
- Communication management structure
- Manual in brief
- Communication basics
- Leasons learned
A changing world *(in the Netherlands)*

- Mass production of meat and chicken
- Use of antibiotics on a large scale
- Changing climate; immigration of animals, plants, insects, diseases
- CO2 emissions of beef, chicken and pork industries
- Turning point: biological food, less meat
- Turning point: more animal rights (living conditions)
A changing world (in the Netherlands)

- Less public trust in authorities
- Authorities/Government lose their monopoly on communication and information
- Explosion of new technology and the use of mobile phone and social media
- Media research versus Government transparency
- Impact of perception of health emergencies, crisis, and hazards versus facts and figures
Strategies of communication on health risks

Perception of risks
• Disaster/Hazard: immediate *(seasonal flue)* versus creeping *(HIV)*
• Media Attention: blog versus national tv news
• Voluntary: own choice *(eat meat)* versus environment *(meat industry)*
• Control: Me *(healthy)* versus He *(obese)*
• Profits: direct *(mobile phone)* indirect *(oil spills)*
• Knowledge *(radiation, ESBL)*
• Trust in authorities/organisations *(nuclear plants)*
Structure

- Hazard
- Outbreak Management Team
- Commission of Local, regional and national administrators
- Ministry of Public Safety and Justice
- Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

Local action

Partners

National Institute for Public Health
Communication team

- Press officer
- Strategic advisor/Team coordinator
- Web editor
- Information analyst
- Community manager/online specialist
- Webcare hosts
Management of communication on health risks

• **Share information:**
  *facts and figures*

• **Damage control:**
  *how to act*

• **Address risks and measures**
  *perspective*

• **Address emotions**
  *address stress, frustrations*
Strategies of communication on health risks

Taking responsibility and decisive action

Swine Flu

Attack and recover

Q-fever

Reticent, monitor

EHEC
Communication basics on health risks

- **Timing**
- **Trust** *(On behalf of Public interest and safety)*
- **Transparent, clear for all**
- **Empathy when needed**
- **Factual and context, invalidate rumors**
- **Coordinated with relevant organisations**
- **Public spokesperson(s)**
- **Expert Pool**
- **Relevant channels and instruments**
- **Media monitoring, analysis**
- **Webcare**
Communication on health risks

✔️ Webcare:

Twitter and health risk communication:

1. Source information
2. Combined information
3. Supporting information
   - Retweets
   - Recommendations
   - Re-sourcing
Communication on health risks

Webcare:
Twitter and health risk communication:

Type of tweets:
- observation/perception: public
- information: authorities, public
- sourcing: authorities, public
- appeals: authorities, public
- action: authorities, public
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Media Monitoring and analysis

Monitoring:
Continuously daily reports:
- Finchline: online and social media (quantitative)
- LexisNexis: all media (articles, blogs)
- Coosto: social media (tweets)
- Zoom media* (radio and tv items)

* Dutch origin
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Media Monitoring and analysis

Analysis:

• Type of media
• Type of information
• Influentials/opponents
• Geographic information
• Tone of voice
• Content/message
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Channels and instruments

- One central website *(facts, figures, context, how to act)*
- Facebook *(Q and A) opt-in*
- Twitter *(Refer, encourage, address) opt-in*
- YouTube *(how to act, context, infographics)*
- SMS Alert *(via Smartphone: how to act, refer) opt-in*
- Cell broadcasting *(via Smartphone: how to act, refer) opt-out*

Live chats and videochats, advertising, expert meetings, posters and tv displays, leaflets
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Our leasons:

1. Risk assessments: keep it practical
2. Take political context into account
3. Understand the necessity of compromise
4. Convince authorities with strong arguments
5. Keep information clear, straight and transparent
6. Look for sponsors and support
7. Know your opponents
8. Make partnerships
9. Keep in touch:
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**Keep in touch:**

- Don’t reassure the public
- Admit uncertainties, share points of view
- Respect the public opinion and emotion
- Don’t make comparisons
- Show the public what to do/how to act

and

*renew the manuals once a year*
*and organize a simulation/exercise twice a year!*