

RISK COMMUNICATION FOR PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES: WORKING TOGETHER DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

DAY 1 | Tuesday 19 Oct 2021
16:00 – 17:30 SGT (90 minutes)

How can we communicate about the pandemic during high uncertainty?



CONCEPT NOTE

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted difficulties in communication due to its evolving nature and the scientific facts around it. Constant changes in the disease information made it arduous for the Health Ministries/Authorities to maintain trust with the population. The pandemic also demonstrated the impact of a disease outbreak beyond the health sector – a pandemic can be utilised for political agenda undermining public health importance, especially when a virus is not well-understood like SARS-CoV-2. Under such circumstances, communicating uncertainty, handling political interface, and engaging the community in doubt of the authority caused a significant challenge on Risk Communication. This session will look into ways to overcome difficulties in communicating while scientific evidence is evolving.

OBJECTIVES

- To address the challenges related to communicating uncertainty, handling political interface & community engagement identified during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- To develop recommendations from the best Risk Communication practices and lessons learnt for the challenges identified above; and
- To identify the areas of inter-national/inter-sectoral collaboration to improve Risk Communication for the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic as well as other EIDs in future.

PANELLISTS

- **Mr Jason GALE**, Biosecurity Correspondent, Bloomberg News.
- **Dr Margaret HARRIS**, Spokesperson, World Health Organization (WHO).

MODERATOR: Ms Riko KIMOTO, Manager for International Public Health, Sustainable Development & Public Health Department, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF).

SESSION COORDINATOR: Ms Riko KIMOTO, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF).

AGENDA | Tuesday 19 Oct 2021: 16:00 – 17:30 SGT

How can we communicate about the pandemic during high uncertainty?

16:00	Welcome Address	Amb MORIKAWA Toru Executive Director, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)
16:10	Introduction	<i>Moderator:</i> Ms Riko KIMOTO Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)
16:15	Panellist 1	Mr Jason GALE Bloomberg News
16:30	Panellist 2	Dr Margaret HARRIS World Health Organization (WHO)
16:45	Roundtable discussion	How to navigate the politics that's inherent in public health?
17:00	Q&A	Ms Riko KIMOTO Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)
17:25	Conclusion	Ms Riko KIMOTO Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)
17:30	Session End	

HASHTAGS

#RiskComm, #ASEFRiskComm, #RiskCommunication, #PublicHealth, #Covid19, #Pandemic, #publichealthemergencies, #PHE, #ASEFPHN

SPEAKER



Amb MORIKAWA Toru, Executive Director, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)

Ambassador MORIKAWA Toru (Japan) joined the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) as its 8th Executive Director in August 2020. ASEF's leadership alternates between Asia and Europe every four years. Ambassador MORIKAWA is a seasoned career diplomat bringing decades of experience and expertise to ASEF. His previous postings include serving as Minister, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Japan in Iran; and Minister-Counsellor, Embassy of Japan in France where he was in charge of various cultural exchange initiatives. He has also worked in the areas of Media and Regional Economic Cooperation and has experience in cultivating and enhancing partnerships for projects with different organisations including the private sector. Ambassador MORIKAWA received his Bachelor's Degree in Law from the University of Tokyo. He is fluent in Japanese, French, and English. He is married with two children.



Ms Riko KIMOTO, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)

Riko KIMOTO, a Japanese national, joined ASEF in April 2016, and she leads ASEF Public Health Network. Prior to joining ASEF, she has gained extensive field NGO/volunteer experience in Latin America, collaborating with the local/international agencies such as Ministry of Health and UNHCR, dealing with a wide range of issues related to health. Other than the Americas, she also worked in Africa as a project supervisor for hospital management. Since she has lived much of her adult life in countries other than her own including Haitian Batey (village) in rural Dominican Republic, she became very capable of adapting to different cultures, lifestyles, and enjoys it.



Mr Jason GALE, Bloomberg News

Jason Gale is a senior editor in Australia with the international news organization Bloomberg News. Jason, who holds a master of health security degree, cut his science-journalism teeth on the H5N1 avian influenza outbreak in 2005, and has been reporting on emerging infectious diseases, antimicrobial resistance and other global health topics since then. Along the way, he's received dozens of international journalism honors, including the American Society of Tropical Medicine & Hygiene's communication award, the Global Health Council's excellence in print media, a Gerald Loeb award for explanatory journalism, and two Overseas Press Club of America awards.



Dr Margaret HARRIS, World Health Organization (WHO)

Margaret Harris, who was born in Australia but now lives in Hong Kong, has spent most of her working life as a communicator, dealing with outbreaks and emergencies in Asia, Africa and Europe. She first trained to be a medical doctor but then became a journalist, working as a foreign correspondent in Europe and Asia for the Sydney Morning Herald/Melbourne Age and later medical editor for the South China Morning Post. During the 2003 SARS outbreak in Hong Kong, she provided information about the protective strategies and behaviours people needed to adopt via a daily column. It was then she decided to study public health at the School of Public Health, University of Sydney, in order to apply the skills, she had developed working as both a doctor and a journalist to public health risk communication. Since then, Dr Harris has spent much of her time working in risk communication for the World Health Organization and UNICEF, mostly in Asia, Africa and Europe, including during the West African Ebola outbreak in 2014-2016, the Korean MERS outbreak and the global Zika virus outbreak. During 2017 she worked with a group of expert emergency risk communicators to search for evidence supporting principles of effective risk communications and wrote the first evidence-based guidance on emergency risk



communication, published in January 2018. During 2019-early 2020, Dr Harris worked in the Democratic Republic of Congo, managing communications for the Ebola response in North Kivu and Ituri, spending much of that time in active conflict zones. When the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, Dr Harris was recalled to Geneva to act as WHO spokesperson for COVID-19, her current role.



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RISK COMMUNICATION FOR PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES: WORKING TOGETHER DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

DAY 2 | Wednesday 20 Oct 2021
16:00 – 17:30 SGT (90 minutes)

Combating infodemic & effective use of social media



CONCEPT NOTE

Risk Communication is characterised as “the exchange of real-time information, advice and opinions between experts and people facing threats to their health, economic or social well-being”, which functions to protect people by enabling them to make informed decisions against the risks¹. In recent years, the internet, including various social media platforms, has made the exchange of information much faster and easier. However, it has also posed a challenge on Risk Communication. With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the United Nations acknowledged “infodemic”, which spreads fake news fast and easy. According to WHO, infodemic is “an excessive amount of information about a problem, which makes it difficult to identify a solution” that spreads misinformation, disinformation and rumours amid PHEs. It has a significant negative impact on public health response and a high risk of creating confusion and distrust among the public². While social media is a useful tool for risk communication, it can also be a source of fake news. This session will look into the infodemic management and effective use of social media during the COVID-19 pandemic.

OBJECTIVES

- To address the challenges related to infodemic management & the use of social media identified during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- To develop recommendations from the best Risk Communication practices and lessons learnt, especially for infodemic management & effective use of social media; and
- To identify the areas of inter-national/inter-sectoral collaboration to improve Risk Communication for the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic as well as other EIDs in future.

PANELLISTS

- **Dr Dinh Anh NGUYEN**, Director General, Health Communication and Reward Department, MoH Viet Nam.
- **Ms Emmanuelle HAMEL**, Head of Unit – Vulnerable Populations, Sante publique France.
- **Dr Zoë HERITAGE**, Prevention of Infectious and Environmental Risks Unit, Sante publique France.
- **Dr Pahurat TAISUWAN**, Director of Secretariat Office of the Royal Development Projects Committee, Department of Disease Control, MoPH Thailand.

MODERATOR: Dr Supriya BEZBARUAH, World Health Organization Regional Office for South-East Asia (WHO SEARO).

SESSION COORDINATOR: Ms Riko KIMOTO, Manager for International Public Health, Sustainable Development & Public Health Department, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF).

¹ <https://openwho.org/courses/risk-communication>

² <https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/un-tackling-%E2%80%98infodemic%E2%80%99-misinformation-and-cybercrime-covid-19>

AGENDA | Wednesday 20 Oct 2021: 16:00 – 17:30 SGT
Combating infodemic & effective use of social media

16:00	Opening	Ms Riko KIMOTO Manager for International Public Health, ASEF
16:10	Introduction	<i>Moderator:</i> Dr Supriya BEZBARUAH World Health Organization Regional Office for South-East Asia (WHO SEARO)
16:15	Panellist 1	Dr Dinh Anh NGUYEN Ministry of Health (MoH) Viet Nam
16:30	Panellist 2	Ms Emmanuelle HAMEL & Dr Zoë HERITAGE Sante publique France
16:45	Panellist 3	Dr Pahurat TAISUWAN Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) Thailand
17:00	Q&A	Dr Supriya BEZBARUAH World Health Organization Regional Office for South-East Asia (WHO SEARO)
17:25	Conclusion	Dr Supriya BEZBARUAH World Health Organization Regional Office for South-East Asia (WHO SEARO)
17:30	Session End	

HASHTAGS

#RiskComm, #ASEFRiskComm, #RiskCommunication, #PublicHealth,
#Covid19, #Pandemic, #publichealthemergencies, #PHE, #ASEFPHN

SPEAKER



Dr Supriya BEZBARUAH, World Health Organization Regional Office for South-East Asia (WHO SEARO)

Dr Supriya Bezbaruah is currently Technical Officer, Risk Communications for public health emergencies with the World Health Organization Regional Office for South-East Asia (WHO SEARO). She has 20 years' experience in risk communications and policy-advocacy for public health and science, mostly in WHO SEARO, which she joined in early 2005. She has supported countries in South-East Asia to develop, implement risk communications strategies and helped build capacity in countries for risk management, risk communication and community engagement. She also has technical and project management experience and was the Project Manager for WHO SEARO for the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework (PIP) from 2014-2016. Further, as a consultant for SEARO from February to September 2018, she continued to support SEARO in influenza and PIP project management. From 2016-2017, she moved as Senior Director for the New York-based international health communications consultancy, Global Health Strategies (GHS), and worked with clients like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation on communications for immunization and maternal and child health in India and South-East Asia. Supriya has a PhD in Cell Biology from University College, University of London, and a B.Sc in Biochemistry from Kings College, University of London. She also has a Master in Public Health from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and a certificate in Project Management from Duke University, USA.



Dr Dinh Anh NGUYEN, Ministry of Health (MoH) Viet Nam

Dr NGUYEN Dinh Anh graduated from Hanoi Medical University in 1994, and earned a Master of International Health from Copenhagen University, Denmark. He spent three years in hospital as practitioner. In 1998, he worked in the Communication and Education Department of the National Committee for Population and Family Planning till 2004, he fully worked for the HIV/AIDS prevention among youth - project funded by ADB with more than 27.5 million USD as vice director. In 2011 - 2012, he moved to Vietnam Government Office, worked directly under Deputy Prime Minister for HIV/AIDS and Drug control in Vietnam. In the end of 2012 until present, he has been working as Vice Director and Director General of Health Communication Department, Ministry of Health in order to set up, running the health communication program in Vietnam, including risk communication. Currently, he closely works with WHO in Vietnam in preparing the master of risk communication plan for next five years.



Ms Emmanuelle HAMEL, Sante publique France

Emmanuelle HAMEL has been working since 2016 as head of the Elderly and vulnerable populations unit at Santé Publique France, the French National Public Health Agency. Her team is in charge of social marketing, toolkits for professionals and studies related to health promotion, inequalities, migrants and precarious populations. She has particular interests in issues to do with participatory approach, capacity building and knowledge transfer. Prior to joining SPF, she had acquired solid experience in the management of public health organizations, as well as in the regional governance of prevention systems, while participating in and managing several local and national projects. She has MA's in sociology, medical training and linguistics and a degree in public health and social administration from the French National School of advanced studies in public health (EHESP).



Dr Zoë HERITAGE, Sante publique France

Zoë Heritage has been working in the Prevention of infectious and environmental risks unit of Public health/Santé publique France (SpF) since May 2020. Her role supports SpF's response to the Covid pandemic. Before that she worked mostly with local governments as part of the WHO Health Cities movement in Africa and Europe. Her PhD studies the links between social and health inequalities.



Dr Pahurat TAISUWAN, Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) Thailand

Dr Pahurat Kongmuang Taisuwan, is currently a Director of Secretariat Office of the Royal Development Projects Committee, Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health. She worked for the Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health, since 2001. She worked in the risk communication field, writing guidelines for public health officers, such as risk communication for responding Ebola, risk communication for International Health Regulation (IHR 2005), risk communication for responding MERS-CoV, risk communication for responding Zika virus, diseases knowledge for public, media and hotline 1422 agents etc. In 2019, she hosted the Asia-Europe countries conference, the High-level Meeting on Risk Communications for Public Health Emergencies, with ASEF. Moreover, during COVID-19 crisis in Thailand, her responsibility is coordination and risk communication from the national level to the community level including coordinate with WR Thailand regarding crisis risk communication, and she is working as an admin of social media platforms, namely "Thai Roo Soo COVID-19" or Thailand's know how to Fight with COVID-19.



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RISK COMMUNICATION FOR PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES: WORKING TOGETHER DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

DAY 3 | Thursday 21 Oct 2021
16:00 – 17:30 SGT (90 minutes)

How can we increase “vaccine confidence”?



CONCEPT NOTE

Vaccination plays a critical part in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. At the 73rd World Health Assembly (WHA) in May 2020, a resolution was issued recognizing “the role of extensive immunization against COVID-19 as a global public good for health in preventing, containing and stopping transmission in order to bring the pandemic to an end, once safe, quality, efficacious, effective, accessible and affordable vaccines are available”³. In 2019, even before the COVID-19 pandemic, WHO identified “vaccine hesitancy” as one of the ten global threats to global health⁴, and the COVID-19 vaccine is not exempt from this phenomenon. The COVID-19 vaccines are fast-tracked in their development due to a public health emergency, yet the standards of quality, safety and efficacy are not compromised⁵. This session will look into how Risk Communication plays a role in promoting “vaccine confidence” amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

OBJECTIVES

- To address the challenges related to Risk Communication on vaccines identified during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- To develop recommendations from the best Risk Communication practices and lessons learnt, especially to increase vaccine confidence; and
- To identify the areas of inter-national/inter-sectoral collaboration to improve Risk Communication for the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic as well as other EIDs in future.

PANELLISTS

- **Mr Maurice KELLY**, Communications Manager, Health Service Executive (HSE), Ireland.
- **Dr Toshibumi TANIGUCHI**, Associate Professor, Department of Infectious Diseases, Chiba University Hospital, Japan.
- **Ms Andrea WÜRZ**, Expert Behaviour Change and Risk Communication, European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).

MODERATOR: **Dr Giri SHANKAR**, Professional Lead Consultant, Health Protection, Public Health Wales (PHW).

SESSION COORDINATOR: **Ms Riko KIMOTO**, Manager for International Public Health, Sustainable Development & Public Health Department, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF).

³ https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA73/A73_R1-en.pdf

⁴ Vaccine hesitancy – the reluctance or refusal to vaccinate despite the availability of vaccines – threatens to reverse progress made in tackling vaccine-preventable diseases” <https://www.who.int/news-room/spotlight/ten-threats-to-global-health-in-2019>

⁵ <https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/human-regulatory/overview/public-health-threats/coronavirus-disease-covid-19/treatments-vaccines/vaccines-covid-19/covid-19-vaccines-development-evaluation-approval-monitoring>

AGENDA | Thursday 21 Oct 2021: 16:00 – 17:30 SGT

How can we increase “vaccine confidence”?

16:00	Opening	Ms Riko KIMOTO Manager for International Public Health, ASEF
16:10	Introduction	<i>Moderator:</i> Dr Giri SHANKAR Public Health Wales (PHW)
16:15	Panellist 1	Mr Maurice KELLY Health Service Executive (HSE), Ireland
16:30	Panellist 2	Dr Toshibumi TANIGUCHI Chiba University Hospital, Japan
16:45	Panellist 3	Ms Andrea WÜRZ European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)
17:00	Q&A	Dr Giri SHANKAR Public Health Wales (PHW)
17:25	Conclusion	Dr Giri SHANKAR Public Health Wales (PHW)
17:30	Session End	

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SPEAKER



Dr Giri SHANKAR, Public Health Wales (PHW)

Dr Giri Shankar is the Professional Lead Consultant for Health Protection at Public Health Wales. He is responsible for overseeing the operational delivery of Health Protection service for the 3 million population across Wales, UK. He also provides leadership and management to senior consultants within the service. Giri has 19 years of experience in public health across Asia, UK and Europe mainly in the area of communicable disease control. His areas of interest are vaccine preventable diseases, emergency planning, cross-border health issues, field epidemiology and research. Giri understands the cultural context of attitudes towards diseases in the native Indian sub-continent population as well as among Ethnic minorities who have migrated from those parts to the UK. He also leads a work package on communication and dissemination in a European Commission project - Joint Action to strengthen preparedness in the EU against serious cross-border threats to health and support the implementation of the International Health Regulations (IHR).



Mr Maurice KELLY, Health Service Executive (HSE), Ireland

Mr Maurice KELLY is responsible for all communications in relation to public health, emergency management and quality improvement within the Irish health services. He has extensive communications experience in relation to communicable diseases having worked for a decade in Ireland's specialist communicable disease agency - HPSC. Maurice previously worked as a media and communications advisor for Ireland's ruling party - Fine Gael - and has provided strategic and tactical advice to a number of former Irish prime ministers, as well as to many currently serving Irish government ministers. He holds a first class Master's degree in Public Relations.



Dr Toshibumi TANIGUCHI, Chiba University Hospital, Japan

Dr Toshibumi Taniguchi, MD, PhD is an Infectious Diseases specialist at Chiba University Hospital, Japan. He graduated from Chiba University School of Medicine in 2001. He moved to the U.S. and completed his internal medicine residency at St. Luke's -Roosevelt Hospital in New York City and infectious diseases fellowship at Washington University in St. Louis. After returning to Japan, his work has been focused on HIV medicine. Since 2020 he has been in the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic. He is a member of Cov-Navi, a Non-profit Organization to promote COVID-19 vaccines in Japan, working extensively with the media, social networking service platforms, and the government.



Ms Andrea WÜRZ, European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

Ms Andrea Würz works at the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), a scientific agency of the European Union, as Expert Behaviour Change and Risk Communication. She works in the Vaccine-Preventable Diseases and Immunisation Programme (VPI-DP). Andrea joined ECDC in 2006. Her activities focus on the development of guides, tools and capacity building activities to support countries in the areas of communication on immunisation, vaccine acceptance and addressing misinformation on vaccines. She also works in the areas of behavioural change and risk communication in ECDC projects on prevention of infectious diseases. She is part of the Public Health Emergency Team involved in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



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