
Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

Working Group on Water and Health

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Water-related disease surveillance

INFORMAL DOCUMENT

Brief summary of the national training workshop on water-related disease surveillance and outbreak response in Kyrgyzstan

Background and purpose:

Establishing, improving and maintaining comprehensive national and local surveillance and early warning systems for water-related disease, contingency plans and response capacities are core provisions of the Protocol on Water and Health to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes.

In 2013, Kyrgyzstan adopted national targets in the context of the Protocol which include specific targets related to reducing number of incidents and waterborne outbreaks and improving WRD surveillance systems. The workshop was organized in response to Kyrgyzstan's request for a capacity building on WRD surveillance and specifically aimed at supporting the country's efforts in implementing the targets set and strengthening water-related disease surveillance and outbreak response systems. It addressed public health and environmental-health specialists from national and oblast levels.

Attendance: The meeting was attended by 45 participants representing the Ministry of Health, as well as state, city and oblast Sanitary and Epidemiological Services. The meeting was technically supported by two experts from the Norwegian Institute of Public Health.

Outcomes: It was the first training involving both epidemiologists and environmental hygiene specialists. The training addressed the following main components:

- Key provisions of the Protocol, in particular those addressing water-related disease surveillance and early warning systems;
- Overview of water-related diseases in the WHO European Region, including available evidence on waterborne outbreaks;
- Situation of water-related diseases and the outbreak surveillance system in Kyrgyzstan;
- Main approaches to surveillance and good practice examples;

- Key principles and elements of outbreak management and methods and tools for epidemiological investigation of waterborne outbreaks; and
- Key challenges and identified actions towards improving the water-related disease surveillance and outbreak response systems in the country.

The training in particular strengthened participants' understanding of types and approaches for effective surveillance of WRDs, good practices in building effective surveillance systems for water-related diseases as well epidemiological investigation of waterborne outbreaks, including hands-on exercises on the application of a statistical tool EpiInfo 7. All training materials (i.e. publications, presentations and EpiInfo 7) were provided to each participant in an e-folder.

Recommended action points:

The participants discussed strengths and key challenges of WRD surveillance and outbreak response systems and identified actions towards improvement, including:

- a. Review the draft targets which are currently being developed/revised under the Protocol on Water and Health and update the formulation of targets to reflect the improvement needs identified at the workshop;
- b. Prepare a national guidance document on methods for WRD surveillance and outbreak response, taking into consideration the linkages with the national guideline on outbreak investigation developed in 2016 with support of the Regional Office;
- c. Develop a systematic training programme and materials (in Russian and Kyrgyz) on WRD surveillance and outbreak management, specifically addressing the following gaps and needs identified at the workshop:
 - Epidemiological studies;
 - Application of methods and statistical tools (EpiInfo) for epidemiologists and sanitary doctors;
 - Design of inter-sectoral simulation exercises, including integration into (ongoing) annual simulation exercises and analysis of lessons learnt;
 - Case studies on outbreak investigation based on experiences of local waterborne outbreaks;
 - Risk communication for decision makers and with the public;
- d. Strengthen institutional capacities, interdisciplinary coordination, as well as the linkage between epidemiologists and sanitary doctors;
- e. Update lab capacities for viral, parasitological and bacteriological water quality analyses, including the provision of mobile labs and required supplies;
- f. Review and incorporate WRD-related contents into under and post-graduate training curricula.