

Citizens can offer valuable input for influenza pandemic planning

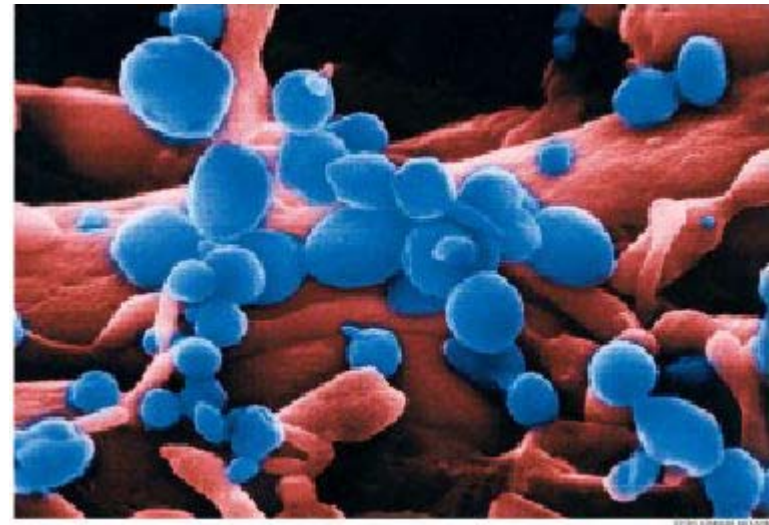
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Pandemic Influenza

- Influenza virus strain to which population has little or no immunity
- Global epidemic
- Experts predict another is forthcoming
- Governments, public health authorities and experts are developing elaborate plans
 - Canadian Pandemic Influenza Plan
 - Ontario Health Plan for an Influenza Pandemic



Agenda

- Public involvement in pandemic planning
- Public Engagement Pilot Project for Pandemic Influenza (PEPPPI) (2005)
- The Use of Antivirals for Prophylaxis (2007)
- Thunder Bay survey (2007)
- Concluding thoughts and future research

Public involvement

- Involving people in the health decisions which will affect them:
 - Is a basic ethics requirement (i.e. fairness, democracy, trust, transparency)
 - Can vitally enhance the probability the public will accept and participate in the execution of these plans
 - Brings additional complexities to the planning process (i.e. public fear)

Public Engagement Pilot Project for Pandemic Influenza (PEPPPI)

- **Asked: What decision-making rationales, ethical principles and financial trade-offs should govern pandemic planning?**
- **24 question survey (pretest and post test)**
- **Background information for participants**
 - Historical information on past pandemics
 - Presentations by ethicists and epidemiologists
- **Hypothetical scenarios/facilitated small group discussions**

Antivirals for Prophylaxis

- **Asked: Should governments provide publicly funded antivirals for prevention? Under what conditions? To whom?**
- **Deliberative citizen's dialogue process**
 - 7 dialogues with citizens across Canada
 - Pre-dialogue questionnaire/discussion
 - Common ground values and principles

Thunder Bay survey



- January and March 2007
- Survey data:
 - pandemic knowledge
 - informational needs, desires and expectations
 - opinions and preferences regarding public involvement
- Two samples:
 - Lac des Mille Lacs First Nations
 - Lakehead University students & staff

Thunder Bay survey cont.

Results indicated that respondents:

1. Underestimated the projected scale and impact of influenza pandemic
2. Were largely unaware of government pandemic plans including Canadian Pandemic Influenza Plan, although expressed great interest in pandemic plans
3. Were in favour of having involvement in pandemic decision making at some level, and indicated their preferred methods of participation

Percentage of Responses Regarding Involvement of the Canadian Public in the Decision Making Process in planning for Pandemic Influenza

Regarding the Canadian public in pandemic influenza decision making...	<i>Lakehead %</i>				<i>LDML %</i>			
	N	Yes	No	Unsure	N	Yes	No	Unsure
There is some benefit to involvement	119	61.3	26.1	12.6	38	55.3	7.6	36.8
There should be more involvement in general pandemic decision making	119	57.1	28.6	14.3	38	73.7	7.9	18.4
There should be more involvement in priority setting decision making	119	58	25.2	16.8	36	68.4	10.5	21.1

Mean Ratings of Preference for Community Engagement methods from Lakehead and LDML respondents

	<i>Lakehead</i>		<i>LDML</i>	
	M	SD	M	SD
I would prefer to be involved in pandemic decision making....				
Not Involved	2.68	1.3	2.83	1.3
Through opinion polls of a sample of the public	3.66	1.07	3.97	0.81
Through open discussion/forums across districts	3.48	1.14	4	0.7
Through townhouse meetings	3.13	1.07	3.75	0.77
Through phone-in Radio/TV programs	3.43	1.2	4.06	0.84

Conclusion

These studies suggest that non-expert groups of citizens :

- 1) Have strong interest to become better informed
- 2) Seek to participate in some aspects of pandemic planning
- 3) With expert assistance, can provide sensible and practical recommendation on such critical issues as prioritization of scarce resources

Future research

- What methods of public involvement should be used (i.e. deliberative methods, forums, polls)?
- What issues specific to the North might affect the public involvement process (i.e. socio-cultural, political, language)?

Thank You