

Report on visit to Paro Airport

The following officials visited Paro Airport and Paro hospital on 23rd may 2009 as per the recommendation of Task Force meeting held on 21st may:

- Dr. Pandup Tshering, JDWNRH
- Mr. Sonam Zangpo, DoPH
- Ms. Roma Karki, DoPH

The objective of this visit was to monitor and supervise the screening of incoming passenger at the air port and find out difficulties, if any at the implementation level. The group had a discussion with the Airport Health Unit personnel. It was found that only one Health Assistant was in the station while the other HA was supposed to go for a workshop. But he was called to come to the airport to join us in the discussion. The group also observed screening of passenger coming in the first flight from BKK via Kolkata.

The group also visited Paro Hospital but could not meet the CMO and DHO since they were out of station for a workshop at Punakha. Cabins and isolation rooms were visited and it was found that the rooms are not yet set up to keep passengers for observation.

Findings as per the discussion and observation:

1. N95 mask was used by Heath Workers, Immigration personnel and Drukair personnel during the arrival of incoming passenger
2. Previously only one health worker was involved in screening the passenger
3. Only passengers coming from affected countries were separated and taken the temperature.
4. Signs and Symptoms of Influenza A(H1N1) was printed and pasted on each immigration counter and each passenger was requested to declare if they have any of those symptoms.
5. Posters on traveler's advisory and preventive measures of Influenza A were pasted at both entry and exit doors as well as on the pillars near immigration counter.
6. Details of passengers were not recorded by the Health Unit rather they were generated by Immigration Unit.
7. Cabin crew and some Bhutanese high officials by passed the immigration counter so they could not be screened.
8. One passenger coming from Kolkata was found to be having fever who was directed to the observation room for further examination. Since both the HAs were engaged in taking temperature, the passenger had to wait in the room until all other passengers were screened. This shows a need of at least one additional Health Worker for examination of passenger with ILI symptoms.
9. The medical examination room did not have OPD prescription.
10. The screening form for Influenza A (H1N1) has not yet been distributed to the passenger in the flight.

11. The medical examination room needs to be set up properly with necessary materials.

Support and advice rendered by the group

1. Advised to discontinue use of N95 mask while screening the passenger. It should be used only when examining the suspect case and collecting swabs.
2. Helped to develop standard form for recording the passenger details
3. Advised to keep OPD prescription at the Health Unit or examination room
4. Suggested them to work out with Drukair about the access of internet. The Health Unit can use the wireless internet at the boarding room when it is not used by the outgoing passenger to send the daily report to MoH on screening.

Requirement by Airport Health Unit

1. Telephone line
2. Spare battery for thermometer
3. Computer
4. Additional manpower at the airport.

Recommendation

1. Guideline on use of PPE, especially on use of N95 mask should be shared with Airport Health Unit.
2. Passenger coming from affected countries - to be discussed in Task Force Meeting.
3. Official letter to be sent to Drukair requesting them to make announcement in the flight to inform passengers about the screening at the airport and to seek their cooperation with Health officials during screening.
4. N95 mask should not be used while screening the passenger which may create panic to the passengers
5. VIPs and cabin crew members should also be screened.
6. Ambulance service from airport to hospital to be used for transporting the suspected case to Paro hospital – can be discussed in Task Force meeting.
7. Fooding for passenger kept for medical observation to be provided by concerned travel/tour agency – can be discussed in Task Force meeting
8. Paro Hospital's preparedness to keep Influenza A suspected passenger for medical observation – to be discussed in the Task Force meeting