



China

Great Wall 2007

1. Background

China has developed laws and regulations to facilitate the response in the case of an influenza pandemic. China has been improving surveillance and alerting mechanisms and is trying to identify pneumonia cases with unknown causes as they arise because this has proven to be an efficient method of identifying suspected human infections with avian influenza at an early stage. China is enhancing the capacity of the emergency response through exercise and training.

Mainland China, Hong Kong and Macao are all subject to the same legislation and policy related to pandemic response, but because each has a different system there have been different interpretations and levels of implementation of the legislation. The government is working on methods to synchronize the three systems to engender an effective response among them. Mainland China, Hong Kong and Macao have all subscribed to the *Implementation Rules of the Collaboration Agreement on the Public Health Emergency Response Mechanism*. Based on this document, China implemented the *Great Wall* exercises on 13 November 2006 and *Great Wall 2007* on 3 December 2007 in mainland China, Hong Kong and Macao.



Emergency Response and Command Centre, Ministry of Health, Beijing, Great Wall 2007 exercise.

2. Objectives

Objectives of the exercise that are featured in this section were:

- to improve the coordinating mechanism and communication channels for emergency response management and techniques in mainland China,

Hong Kong and Macao in the event of an influenza pandemic;

- to test influenza pandemic emergency response preparedness;
- to share experience in response to severe communicable diseases and other public health emergencies and make preparations for the response to a possible pandemic.

3. Participating agencies and organizations

Participating agencies include:

- Ministry of Health
- Jiangsu Provincial Health Bureau
- Hong Kong Department of Health
- Macao Department of Health
- China Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- other relevant ministries and technical organizations.

4. Type of exercise

Full-scale exercise.

5. Preparation for the exercise

In the preparation of the exercise, the following activities were conducted:

- Meetings were held to discuss the design of the exercise, coordinate the development of the exercise protocol, test the audiovisual equipment, discuss information dissemination etc.
- A field visit was conducted to supervise the preparation of the field part of the exercise in Jiangsu province, and identify and solve existing problems.
- Design and development of the exercise scenario were conducted.
- The exercise protocol and script were developed and revised.
- Rehearsals of the exercise were undertaken to identify and solve the existing problems in the preparation.

6. Conduct of the exercise

The exercise took place in Beijing, Jiangsu province, Hong Kong and Macao, which were linked with the aid of audiovisual technology. Officials and experts from the Ministry of Health, Jiangsu Provincial Health Bureau, Hong Kong Department of Health, Macao Department



Influenza patients are transferred by ambulance, Great Wall 2007 exercise, Jiangsu province.

of Health, China Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other relevant ministries and technical organizations participated in the conduct of the exercise. Vice-Minister Wang Longde of the Ministry of Health attended the opening ceremony to show support for the exercise and the pandemic influenza response in general. Director-General Chen Xianyi of the Office of Health Emergency of the Ministry of Health chaired the opening ceremony.

The *Great Wall 2007* exercise simulated a cluster of human infection with avian influenza in a family with three confirmed cases and two close contacts. All the cases had the same exposure history – visiting a poultry market. One individual travelled to Hong Kong and Macao before the symptoms appeared. The joint response and

action mechanism, including control and prevention measures and risk communication, was tested.

The exercise resulted in the following conclusions:

- The virus gene did not mutate, which showed the virus had not obtained the ability to efficiently transmit from human to human.
- With the efforts of the health administrative authorities the epidemic was controlled efficiently, all cases were cured and all their close contacts were discharged without the appearance of clinical symptoms.

7. Evaluation

Evaluation of the exercise was conducted by an expert team after the exercise had concluded. A summary meeting to discuss the performance of the exercise was held with the participation of key representatives from the participating agencies. The national plan was reviewed in light of lessons learnt in the exercise.

8. Lessons learnt

The *Great Wall 2007* exercise was found to have effectively simulated the response system in all three regions and found that information sharing channels and coordination were smooth. In order to conduct a joint response to an influenza pandemic, training is important in overcoming the barriers identified in the exercise. It is also crucial to strengthen international communication, training and research to enhance the capacity of the three regions.