

Radosław Izdebski

Abstract

Subject: Development of a new methodology for obtaining information on the state of implementation of the International Health Regulations IHR (2005) in Poland in the areas of Points of Entry and Human Resource Capacity

Introduction: International Health Regulations (2005), IHR (2005), have been developed to ensure and improve the capacity of all World Health Organization (WHO) member countries to prevent, detect, assess, notify, report and respond to international public health emergencies. One of the WHO's obligations resulting from the IHR (2005) is to monitor the implementation of these regulations by each member state, including Poland. The assessment of the implementation status of the IHR (2005) has been ongoing since 2010 and is based on the WHO questionnaire „Questionnaire for monitoring progress in the implementation of IHR (2005) core capacities in states parties” sent annually to all member states and since 2018 based on self-assessment tool State Parties Self-Assessment Annual Reporting Tool (SPAR). However, the events related to emerging diseases, e.g. the Ebola outbreak in 2014 in West Africa, showed that the information provided by the WHO member states regarding the implementation of the IHR in a given country is not consistent with the reality. Therefore, WHO strives to ensure that all Member States have a strong and integrated system for monitoring and evaluation of the IHR (2005) at the national level, independent of the international system for monitoring the implementation of these regulations.

The aim of the doctoral dissertation: Development of a new methodology for obtaining information on the implementation status of the International Health Regulations (2005) in Poland in the areas of „Points of Entry” and „Human Resource Capacity”.

Method: The development of the new methodology for obtaining information on the implementation status of the International Health Regulations (2005) in Poland in the areas of „Points of Entry” and „Human Resource Capacity” consisted of the following stages:

- **Selection of chapters for study.**

Two out of 13 chapters of the WHO questionnaire „Questionnaire for monitoring progress in the implementation of IHR core capacities in states parties” have been selected for the study. The selected chapters are: chapter 7. Human Resource Capacity and chapter 9. Points of Entry (PoE).

- **Creation of expert groups in the area of „Points of Entry” and „Human Resource Capacity”.**

Expert groups in the areas of „Points of Entry” and „Human Resource Capacity” were formed of experts whose activities in the field of Public Health include the International Health Regulations (2005). The appointed experts were responsible for analyzing the questions contained in the selected chapters of the WHO questionnaire and adapting them to the specificity of our country, and for helping in the preparation of a new research tool.

- **Validation of chapters selected for the study from the WHO.**

For this purpose, a four-stage validation process of the chapters selected for the study from the WHO questionnaire was carried out, based on the guidelines on how to translate, validate and adapt the instruments of the World Health Organization, which ended with the development of a proprietary research tool.

- **Development of an innovative research tool and preparation of a questionnaire in an electronic version.**

The research tool in the areas of „Points of Entry” and „Human Resource Capacity” which is the main part of the new methodology, was developed on the basis of the existing WHO questionnaire, which was sent to the Member States by WHO in the years 2010 - 2017. The proprietary questionnaire was developed in an electronic version using the EUSurvey system, used to generate online questionnaires.

- **Development of procedure proposal for submitting the proprietary questionnaire between institutions.**

The procedure for submitting a proprietary questionnaire between institutions operating within the scope of the International Health Regulations (2005) was proposed for the areas of „Points of Entry” and „Human Resource Capacity”. The proposed procedure included, among others, units responsible for sending the questionnaire to recipients, a list of recipients operating in the field of IHR (2005) in the studied areas and the schemes for sending the questionnaire between institutions.

- **Assessment of the newly developed questionnaire and its submission procedure.**

The developed questionnaire was assessed during the annual meeting of the State Border Sanitary Inspectors in Przemyśl, which was organized by the Chief Sanitary Inspectorate. Based on the opinions obtained during the expert panel, a SWOT analysis was developed for the new research tool and the procedure for its submission.

Summary: The WHO questionnaire „Questionnaire for monitoring progress in the implementation of IHR core capacities in states parties” is a perfect basis for each country to develop an individual questionnaire adapted to the specifics and applicable law in a given country, in the areas covered by the implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005), taking into account the administrative division and the current geopolitical situation of the country. Evaluation and monitoring of the implementation status of the IHR (2005) at the local, regional and national level should be carried out in an integrated and systematic manner and should cover all units operating within the scope of these regulations, distinguishing them by sector. In addition, it should be carried out independently of the international IHR (2005) monitoring system.

Conclusions: Development of a new methodology for obtaining information on the implementation status of the International Health Regulations (2005) in Poland in the areas of „Points of Entry” and „Human Resource Capacity” will contribute to:

- Improving the monitoring of „Points of Entry” and „Human Resource Capacity” areas in the scope of the IHR (2005) implementation .
- Quick and easy access to up-to-date information, at the local, regional and national level, on the implementation status of the IHR (2005) in individual units.
- Gaining knowledge about the level of preparedness of the surveyed units in the case of *the* public health emergency of international concern.
- Gaining knowledge about the number of qualified personnel operating in the field of IHR (2005) and dealing with public health events at local, regional and national level.
- Gaining knowledge about the training needs of employees responsible for taking action in the field of events posing a cross-border threat to public health.
- Gaining knowledge about the actual number of designated and authorized ports in Poland.
- Standardization of procedures for completing the annual WHO questionnaire due to the collected data.
- Planning the annual budget for activities related to the IHR (2005).
- Updating and reorganizing action plans in various units operating in the field of IHR (2005) at the national level.
- Identifying gaps and possible solutions or corrections in the implementation of the IHR (2005) at the local, regional and national level.

Key words: International Health Regulations (2005), Public Health, Points of Entry, Human Resource Capacity