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Evaluating health systems' preparedness for emerging infectious diseases: a novel conceptual and analytic framework.

[Krumkamp R](#)¹, [Mounier-Jack S](#), [Ahmad A](#), [Reintjes R](#), [Coker R](#).

[Author information](#)

Abstract

In this article we present a novel conceptual framework for systematically assessing the national health system capacity to respond to pandemic influenza. This framework helps to determine how health systems and pandemic programmes interact, whether, where and which weak points exist, and how and where pandemic response health programmes can be improved effectively. This new conceptual framework draws upon two existing approaches for assessment and evaluation, the Systemic Rapid Assessment Toolkit (SYSRA) and the Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Points (HACCP). SYSRA is a systematic approach to analyse the interplay between communicable disease programmes and the broader health systems context within which they operate and the HACCP methodology builds upon a systematic analysis of process steps within a programme in order to identify likely hazards and to develop control measures to address them. The analytical framework that we have developed from the novel conceptualisation is simple, can be applied rapidly, and should, we believe, be low cost to implement. Thus, this provides a means for developing a contextual understanding of the broader health system in which a pandemic infectious disease programme operates, and for identifying frailties in programmes that need to be responded to.