

EWRS Technical Guidance Document:

Operative criteria for the identification of events to be reported within the Early Warning and Response System (EWRS) of the Community Network for the surveillance and control of communicable diseases, according to the definitions of Annex I of Decision 2000/57/EC

Checklist of criteria for the identification of events to be reported to EWRS

CRITERIA (One "YES" is enough to indicate the need of reporting to EWRS)	YES	NO or NOT KNOWN
Potential for international links		
1. Are there factors related to the host or environment that should alert us to the potential for international spread? (1)		
2. Is the source known <u>or suspected</u> to be a food product or any other goods that has been imported from or exported to other Countries? (2)		
Unexpectedness		
3. Is the disease unknown?		
4. Is the event caused by a disease/agent that had already been eliminated or eradicated of the country? (3)		
5. Is the event known <u>or suspected</u> to be the result of an intentional or accidental release of biological agent? (4)		
6. Is there any other reason for the event to have an intrinsic Community-relevant impact? <i>Auxiliary arguments for your judgement, when answering this question, are listed below.</i>		
a. Have clusters of the same disease been detected/reported recently in another country/ies? (5)		
b. Have similar events in the past resulted in Community spread of the disease? (6)		
c. Has the event reached an important size or impact? (7)		
d. Does the event show any feature unusual for the disease? (8)		
e. Are there any concurrent factors that may potentiate the event or hinder or delay the response? (9)		
f. Are the available resources for this event insufficient to detect, investigate or control it? (10)		
g. Is any vulnerable population group at higher risk? (11)		
h. Are there multiple foci in the country?		
i. Have cases been reported amongst health service staff?		
l. Has the event attracted <u>or is likely to attract</u> a high degree of international media or political attention?		

NOTES to the criteria

- (1) The factors that may facilitate the cross border of cases and/or agents are determined by a combination of different factors related to the host, or environment.
 - ✓ Host: the index case has a history of international travel within the previous month (or time equivalent to the incubation period if the pathogen is known) or history of participation in an international gathering (pilgrim, sport event, conferences, etc), or the event is linked to international tourism activities.
 - ✓ Environment: the event has occurred in a border area or an area with commercial, travel or tourist activity from/to other countries.
- (2) Goods may include, e.g., non food products, animals, and equipment that may be contaminated at the origin or during operation
- (3) Length of time from the last known case greater than 10-20 year or local institutional memory
- (4) The evaluation may require consideration of several pieces of information, including other criteria in this list, as well as the peculiarity of the circumstances of the contamination in conjunction with e.g.:
 - ✓ a disease/agent that may result in a major health impact, such as those listed in the CDC A or B lists
 - ✓ an unidentifiable agent or an agent with markedly changed characteristics
- (5) Consideration of other clusters should be limited to those for which an epidemiological link may be likely, or to those where applied countermeasures are less effective than expected.
- (6) Consideration should be given to the peculiarities of the events compared, such as the source, vector or vehicle of the infectious agent and the geographical location of the event.
- (7) Such evaluation is to be applied repeatedly during the course of an on-going outbreak, even in case that no potential factors of international relevance are present. It may consider, for example, the unusual size of the outbreak (the cumulative number of cases being reported), or the occurrence of cases in an area with a high population density, in conjunction with features of the agent and of the treatment, such as: How infective is the agent? How easy is the transmission person-to-person? Is the incubation period long enough to allow infected and asymptomatic people to travel? Is a treatment available? How safe, and tolerable to the patient is the treatment? How easy and effective are treatments or control measures?
- (8) To assess whether the event is unusual, the following questions should be considered:
 - Is the clinical evolution of cases more severe than usual? Have cases presented with unusual symptoms?
 - Higher case fatality rate?
 - Is there any indication of treatment failure? Antibiotic resistance? New strains?
 - Is the number of cases unusually large for the area or at that time of the year?
 - Is the occurrence of this disease unusual for the area or at that time of the year?
- (9) E.g. natural catastrophes, armed conflicts, unfavourable weather conditions, etc,
- (10) Some of the questions that may assist in the review of resources are:
 - ✓ Is there enough people with the needed skills that can be allocated for the investigation and management of the event?
 - ✓ Are the laboratory resources enough? Are the laboratories in the country equipped to diagnose the specific disease?
 - ✓ Is the national surveillance system adequate enough to detect new cases?
 - ✓ When applicable: Are the drug stock and/or vaccine stock and/or protective gears available and enough to cover estimated needs?
 - ✓ Are there any preparedness and emergency plans covering the problems related to this event?

(11) Consideration should be given to refugees, drug users, low level of immunization, children under 5 years old, pregnant women, undernourished, etc)