

**COMMENTS ON THE SARS OUTBREAK : A SUBMISSION TO HONG
KONG GOVERNMENT REVIEW PANEL**

The following improvements on the health care system are proposed to handle infectious disease outbreaks:

1. ***Health care is customized according to needs.*** The health care system should be designed to handle the most common types of infectious diseases but should have the capability to respond to the sudden outbreak of uncommon types of infectious diseases.
2. ***Needs are anticipated.*** The system should anticipate patient needs, rather than simply react to events.
3. ***Health care is patient-centred.*** Patients should receive care whenever they need it among all Hospital Authority (HA) clusters. The health care system must be responsive at all times.
4. ***Patient is the source of control.*** Patients/patients' relatives should be given the necessary information and choice for therapy, e.g., drug treatment. They should be given opportunity to exercise the degree of control they choose over health care decisions that affect them.
5. ***Patient choice comes first.*** Patients/patients' relatives are encouraged to participating into the decision on the drug treatment. Informed consent should be obtained from patients/patients' relatives for any off-labeled use of drugs. Relevant important drug information, e.g., side-effects, contraindications and possible alternative treatments, etc., should be provided.
6. ***Transparency of drug treatment is a must.*** Patients/patients' relative should have free access to their own medication information and to clinical knowledge. Clinicians and patients/patients' relatives should communicate effectively and share information.
7. ***Drug safety is important.*** Patients should be safe from serious adverse drug reaction caused by the high doses of drug treatment or off-labeled use of drugs. Pharmacists should be informed about the drug treatment protocol for safety sake.
8. ***Make use of the role of Pharmacists.*** Pharmacists should be involved in any drug treatment process. Pharmacists play an important role in ensuring drug safety, providing drug information and promoting cost-effective use of drugs. Pharmacist should be employed to communicate with patients/patients' relatives about the use of drugs and provide necessary drug information and counseling to them. It seems that the present health care system under-utilizes the role of pharmacist profession in the outbreak of infectious disease.

9. ***Decision making is evidence-based.*** Patients should receive care based on the best available scientific evidence. Care should not vary illogically from clinician to clinician or from hospital to hospital.
10. ***Knowledge should be shared and information flows freely among all clusters.*** Clusters should communicate effectively and share information.
11. ***Cooperation among all clusters and two universities is a priority.*** All institutions should actively collaborate and communicate to ensure an appropriate exchange of information and coordination of care.
12. ***Waste is continuously decreased.*** The health care system should not waste resources or patient time.

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