

FEB - MARCH 2024

THE IHR STRENGTHENING PROJECT NEWSLETTER

Updates from UKHSA's
International Health Regulations
Strengthening Project (IHR-SP)

In this edition:

- Updates from the IHR-SP
- New resources on the IHR-SP Knowledge Hub
- Media round-up
- Wellbeing tip

Welcome!

This publication provides updates for the project's internal colleagues and external partners. If you have any queries, feedback or contributions please contact:

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Strategic partnerships: developing Africa's future laboratory leaders

Laboratory staff are recognised and valued for their technical skills but managing a national public health laboratory and its staff requires leadership skills that are rarely taught as part of conventional training. As UKHSA's International Health Regulations Strengthening Project (IHR-SP) laboratory strengthening experts worked with partner countries to deliver technical assistance activities, a need for enhanced leadership skills was quickly identified to ensure technical learnings could be sustainably embedded into organisations and public health systems. This initiated the development of the Public Health Laboratory Leaders programme.



IHR-SP team and delegates at the IHR-SP Public Health Laboratory Leadership programme, Nairobi, Kenya, February 2024

Most recently, working with Africa CDC, the IHR-SP established a programme for Public Health Laboratory Leaders across the continent to facilitate skills development in the areas of laboratory management and leadership. To date, three programmes for laboratory leaders from across Africa have been delivered in Ethiopia (2022), Senegal (2023) and Kenya (2024).

Each programme was delivered as a five-day in-person session that provided participants with a dedicated learning space to explore leadership concepts and apply new knowledge and skills via case study and discussion. An opportunity to create a self-sustaining network of public health laboratory leaders across Africa was also explored.

The IHR-SP was designed for this purpose, for responding to partners' needs through co-design and co-delivery of strengthening activities with Official Development Assistance (ODA) eligible countries - building sustainable networks by facilitating, enabling conditions for big conversations, and equipping public health leaders to be the best they can be.

IHR-SP and Nigeria CDC Keep Pushing the annual simulation exercise programme

Exercise Keep Pushing (KP) is an annual simulation exercise that has been co-developed and co-delivered by the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and the IHR Strengthening Project (IHR-SP) Emergency Planning Preparedness and Response (EPRR) team since 2018. The purpose of the KP series is to test command, control, coordination and communication between the national Public Health Emergency Operating Centre (PHEOC) and sub-national PHEOCs within Nigeria.

In February 2024, the IHR-SP EPRR team supported the fifth iteration of Exercise Keep Pushing (KP 5). KP 5 brought together veterinary and environmental scientists alongside One Health colleagues and emergency response specialists from the national headquarters and across six states to consider the NCDC response to a Rabies outbreak. A multi-sectoral exercise was selected for KP 5 following Nigeria's Joint External Evaluation (JEE) in 2023, which highlighted that improved intra- and multisectoral and One Health coordination and collaboration is a key principle in improving Nigeria's capability to prevent, detect and rapidly respond to public health incidents, particularly in the States.



Former NCDC Director General, Dr Idefayo Adetifa and UKHSA Chief Executive Professor Dame Jenny Harries give opening remarks to participants and facilitators at Keep Pushing 5

The IHR-SP supported NCDC to deliver KP 5 by developing the aims and objectives, providing technical advice on injects, briefing exercise controllers who were deployed to the States as part of the exercise, and by being evaluators and observers on the day of the exercise. Additionally, IHR-SP shared knowledge and expertise within One HMG as we collaborated with our colleagues in the UK Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) to provide subject matter expertise to participants and NCDC exercise controllers.

Over two days, the scientists and EPRR staff exercised the response to scientific data, logistical difficulties and media speculation. Participant feedback was overwhelmingly positive with multiple participants stating that the exercise has increased and or reinforced knowledge in how to respond to zoonotic infections using a One Health approach.

Updates from the IHR Strengthening Project

UKHSA IHR-SP Contribute to Strengthening Southeast Asia's Capacity on Multisector Coordination in Chemical Events

The United Kingdom Health Security Agency IHR-Strengthening Project team in Southeast Asia (UKHSA IHR-SP SEA Team) organised its first workshop on multisectoral coordination and response to chemical events on 20-22 February 2024 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Conducted in partnership with the ASEAN Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Network and the Ministry of Health (MOH), Malaysia, the workshop was attended by 32 participants representing 9 ASEAN Member States (AMS). The workshop saw a high level of engagement and active participation through working groups and plenary discussions.

Chemical events are an often under-reported hazard to public health with events such as oil spills, waste fires and others impacting health. These issues have become increasingly prevalent across South East Asia with incidents such as the 2019 illegal chemical dumping in the Kim-Kim river leading to a toxic gas release that hospitalised 2,775 people in Malaysia, raising the importance of chemical incident response and management. Multisector response to chemical hazards is a key component of the International Health Regulations, which includes coordination between emergency services, public health, environment agencies and many others.

The workshop received positive feedback from all participants. Most of the positive feedback indicated that they intended to use the learning from the workshop in their role and in future activities in their country. After the workshop, the UKHSA IHR-SP SEA Team, ASEAN EOC Network and MOH Malaysia discussed valuable learnings and committed to continue this collaborative work to strengthen the region's capacity to respond to chemical hazards.

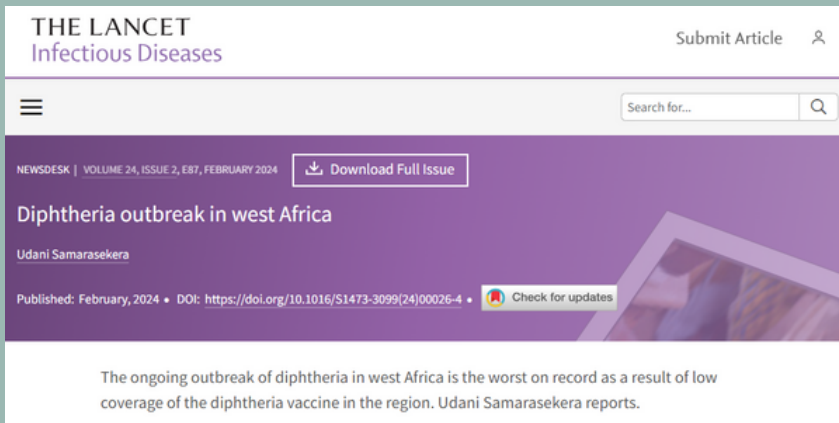
[Read the full story on the Hub](#)



Representatives of UKHSA IHR-SP SEA, ASEAN Secretariat, ASEAN EOC Network, Ministry of Health Malaysia and nine ASEAN Member States

IHR-SP Media Round Up

A selection of recent appearances of the IHR Strengthening Project in the media and social media.



Diphtheria outbreak in West Africa

The IHR-SP provided a quote to a journalist writing for the Lancet about our support to the diphtheria outbreak in West Africa.

'The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is supporting the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention "by offering training and support with scaling up testing, response coordination, and mobilising treatment", said Olusola Aruna, Country Lead for UKHSA's International Health Regulation Strengthening Programme in Nigeria.'

[Read the full article here \(subscription required\).](#)

DHSC Deputy Chief Medical Officer visits Ethiopia

Deputy Chief Medical Officer Thomas Waite visited our IHR-SP team in Ethiopia alongside the UK Public Rapid Support Team to discuss progress on global health security with our shared partners, including Ethiopia Public Health Institute, Africa CDC, Africa Union and the British Embassy. See below for some coverage of the visit.



Engaging discussions between @dereje_dugumaMD and UK delegation led by @Thomas_Waite.

Great to have Deputy Chief Medical Officer @Thomas_Waite @DHSCgovuk visit our #IHR_Strengthening team in Ethiopia along with our #UKPHRST team, to discuss progress on global health security with our shared key partners @EPHIethiopia, @AfricaCDC, @AfricanUnion and @UKinEthiopia

Both the UK and Ethiopia share strong commitments for better health security.

@DHSCgovuk @FCDOgovUK @UKHSA



Global Health Security, DHSC UK and 7 others



32 likes
ukhsa Ahead of #February11, we're celebrating International Day of Women and Girls in Science with this LinkedIn blog from Dr Dingase Mvula, Technical Advisor for the #IHR_StrengtheningProject on why she's passionate about her career in science.
Click the link in our bio to read the full blog post > #STEMCareers #GlobalHealth #Science #WomenAndGirlsInScience

International Day of Women and Girls in Science

As part of International Day of Women and Girls in Science, UKHSA celebrated some of our amazing colleagues working across the organisation, showcasing the wide range of possibilities for those thinking about taking up a career in science. This included **Dr Dingase Mvula**, Emergency Preparedness, Response & Resilience Technical Advisor for IHR-SP's Zambia team (above) and **Maimoona Junaid**, Higher Project Support Officer in our IHR-SP Pakistan team (below).



For this International Day of Women and Girls in Science (11 February) we are celebrating some of our amazing colleagues working across the organisation, and showcasing the wide range of possibilities for those thinking about taking up a career in science.

In this blog post, Maimoona Junaid, Higher Project Support Officer for the International Health Regulations Strengthening Project, gives us a glimpse into her role and why she believes the insight and experience of young women is important to the future of public health.

#February11 #Science #WomenAndGirlsInScience #STEMCareers #GlobalHealth

#IHR_Strengthening

Wellbeing Update

April is Stress Awareness Month

Stress is inevitable in our daily lives. But when it's too much, it can negatively impact how you show up in your professional and personal lives. That's why it's important to take a preventative approach and build healthy coping mechanisms, so you can feel calmer, more centred, and truly thrive under any circumstances.

Here are some stress relief resources from Calm to help you get started:

Overcome Stress and Anxiety

In this guided meditation series with Dr Julie, you get to explore 11 different tools to reclaim your calm, overcome acute anxiety and chronic stress, and build confidence for life.

Pump the Breaks on Stress

In this 3-minute grounding exercise with Jay Shetty, you'll learn how to regain control of your mind and body through breathwork and physical motions.

Lower Body Stress

In this 7-minute Daily Move session with Mel Mah, you'll stretch and relax your lower body so you can release any tension from the day.

Infinite Ambient for Relaxation

This ambient music track has been uniquely created by real musicians and designed to play for however long you need till you fall asleep.

Join a **Calm App Webinar** to learn how to personalise your app experience or deep dive into monthly themed topics to enhance your mental health toolkit.

The Stress Management Society is a non-profit organisation and the UK's leading authority on stress management. They offer practical support and advice to help individuals and companies recognise and reduce stress. You can find a host of free resources on the [Stress Management Society website](#), and find something that works for you.

