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SC2 Paper No. : W123(C)

I am required to give statement on the specified areas of study by the Select Committee. Please refer to my answers to the questions set out below

1. Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) was designed as a Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) on 26 March 2003? Were you involved in the discussion on the designation of PMH as a SARS hospital? If not, why not? If yes, what views did you express?

I was not involved in the discussion to designate PMH as SARS hospital. I was involved in the discussion on preparing PMH to take up the mission.

2. Were you involved in making the necessary preparation? If not, why not? If yes, for what preparations were you responsible? How much time were you allowed to undertake the preparations? Did you consider the time allowed sufficient? If not, did you raise your concern with the hospital management? If not, why not? If yes, what was the management's response? Did you consider PMH ready to serve as a SARS hospital on 29 March 2003? If not, why not? If yes, was the basis of your view?

I was responsible for infection control issues and my infection control team advised and educated our colleagues on the appropriate precaution that should be taken. Infection control team had intensified training program on SARS which had been ongoing in March to all rank of staff after enlisting help from Central Nursing Department.

We sought the advice from EMSD engineers to improve the ventilation of SARS ward and create negative pressure in the cubicle by installing exhaust fans. The beds had to be spaced out

We formed an infection control enforcement team which was composed of infection control officer, infection control nurse, senior medical officers of department of Medicine and Geriatrics, senior nurses and unit representative. We worked together to redesign the workflow and delineate dirty and clean zones, dress code, gowning and de-gowning areas, poster and signage at each work place.

The sudden influx of patients into PMH within few days was beyond everyone anticipation and we had to fight a battle against an infectious disease of a magnitude exceeding our surge capacity

3. As the Infection Control Officer, did you advise the hospital management that infection control measures in PMH and other hospitals within the Kowloon West (KW) Cluster should be stepped up, given the SARS outbreak at Prince of Wales Hospital? If not, why not? If yes, what were the details of your advice? Was any action taken on your advice?

HAHO had updated the infection control precaution after the incident in Prince of Wales Hospital. We had followed the guideline accordingly.

4. As the Infection Control Officer, did you give any specific advice on whether additional infection control measures need to be put in place to prepare PMH to be a SARS hospital? If not, why not? If yes, what were the details of your advice? Was any action taken on your advice?

I had given advice on the preparation work as detailed in question 2 and 3. All were well taken.

5. As the Infection Control Officer, did you advise the hospital management on how to prepare the healthcare workers (HCWs) to handle additional SARS patients after it was decided that PMH should serve as a SARS hospital? If not, why not? If yes, what were the details of your advice? Were additional guidelines and training on infection control provided? If not, why not? If yes, what were the details of the guidelines and training? How were the guidelines disseminated to HCWs and how did you ensure that they were aware of the guidelines?

I had recommended to take precaution which was in line with the HAHO guideline. The program of infection control education was stepped up to enhance the knowledge on SARS and precaution. To promote awareness among the staff, video on PPE was prepared and was run continuously in public place such as canteen and lobby. Demonstration and exhibit was held in Community Health resource centre. Posters and sign were put up in each workplace to alert staff. Patrol staff was stationed at the entrance of each ward to monitor the compliance and rectify the noncompliance instantly on the spot. On site visits and teaching by ICN and senior nurses were made to make sure all precautions were in place. Spot check was conducted by senior nurse. Guidelines with photo illustration were also posted on PMH intranet.

6. As the Infection Control Officer, did the head office of the Hospital Authority directly communicate with you to provide information on infection control measures and guidelines as well as the outbreak of SARS at other HA hospitals? If yes, what and how was the information provided? If not, why not?

Central committee on infection control communicated with all ICO and ICN via e-mail and meetings were arranged to review and share the latest information on SARS.

7. A series of staff forums were held for the KW Cluster commencing 27 March 2003. Did you and/or any of the HCWs under your charge attend these forums? If not, why not? If yes, what was your and their assessment of the usefulness of these forums?

A series of staff forum were held which were useful in boosting the morale of our staff. We were kept updated about the latest development and the top management could get the feedback from the frontline staff. Outside experts also came to share their experience and knowledge.

8. How many HCWs in PMH were infected during the SARS outbreak at PMH? Why and how were they infected? Were there problems with the supply of personal protection equipment? If yes, how were the problems resolved?

63 staff were infected in PMH.. The possible causes are the high virus load, large number of ill patients, numerous high risk procedures in ICU, heavy workload, work stress and fatigue. To my understanding there was no major problem with supply of PPE.

9. The New Territories Regional Office of the Department of Health (DH) set up a control centre at PMH on 28 March 2003. Did you know why the centre was set up? Did DH ask for any information? If yes, what information did DH ask for? What was the working relationship between this centre and PMH's own control and coordinating centre?

I was not involved in this arrangement. To my understanding the DH control centre was set up in PMH on 31 Mar 03.

10. Was the respiratory equipment used in the intensive care units of PMH and other hospitals within the KW Cluster equipped with filters? If yes, was the respiratory equipment only equipped with filters during the SARS outbreak? If yes, when was the equipment fitted with filters and on whose advice?

Respiratory equipments were fitted with filters for preventing possible airborne infectious diseases such as TB all along before outbreak of SARS.


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