

Use of #SocialMedia @WHO in the context of the Fukushima nuclear accident

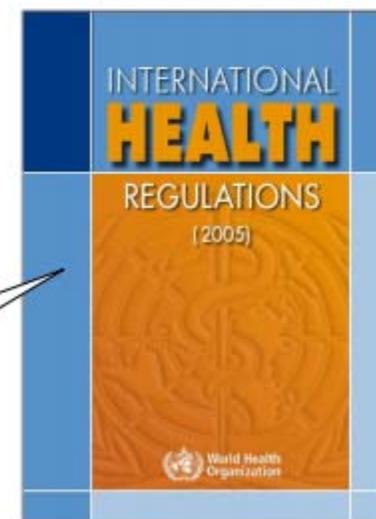
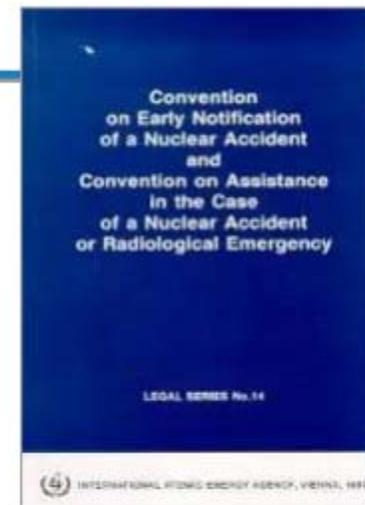
Monika Gehner, World Health Organization
RICOMET 2015, 16 June 2015



World Health
Organization

WHO's role in Radiation Emergency Response

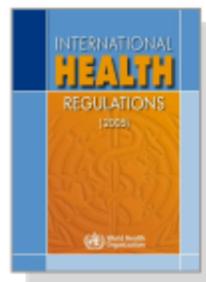
- **WHO Constitution (1948)**
 - Article 2 (d): "...to furnish appropriate technical assistance and, in emergencies, necessary aid upon requests of Government."
- **Emergency Conventions (1986)**
 - "Early Notification" and "Assistance"
- **Joint Radiation Emergency Management Plan (since 2000)**
 - currently in its 6th edition
- **WHA Resolution 55.16 (2002)**
 - "Global public health response to natural occurrence, accidental release or deliberate use of biological and chemical agents or radionuclear material that affect health"
- **International Health Regulations (2005)**



IHR communication

Fukushima Daiichi NPP accident

- On March 11 2011, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan notified the situation at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant through the National IHR Focal Point within a few hours
- WHO immediately communicated the event to all Member States in the region through its National IHR Focal Points



Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant accident

WHO provided information to the public to:

- Inform decision-making (e.g. travel, trade)
- Prevent risky reactions (e.g. potassium iodide)
- Allay unnecessary fears (e.g. breastfeeding)
- Promote healthy behaviours (e.g. pregnancy)



Fukushima: a social media paradigm shift for WHO

- WHO immediately set up integrated communications, essential for social media:
 - 24/7 communications
 - Messaging: fact sheets, Q&As, spokesperson training
 - Media statements, pre
 - Dedicated web pages
 - Big difference to the past: social media

Frequently asked questions

[FAQs: Japan nuclear concerns](#)
September 2011

[FAQs: Japan nuclear concerns \(in Japanese\)](#) 

[FAQs: Japan tsunami concerns](#)
21 March 2011

General information

[Update 5: Information on drinking water safety released](#)
25 March 2011

Technical guidance - nuclear crisis

[Use of potassium iodide for thyroid protection](#)
Publication date: 29 March 2011

[↓ INFOSAN Note Radionuclides and food](#)
pdf, 184kb

Publication date: 30 March 2011

[Manual for First Responders to a Radiological Emergency \[pdf, 2.2MB\]](#) 
Publication date: October 2006

[Generic procedures for medical response during a nuclear or radiological emergency \[pdf, 2.2MB\]](#) 
Publication date: 2005

[More information: ionizing radiation](#)

[More publications: technological](#)

Contact information

For more information,
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Related links

[Environmental health in emergencies web site](#)

[Ionizing radiation web site](#)

[Radiation accidents health topic page](#)

[WHO Regional Office for Western Pacific Region](#) 

[Section on the crisis in Japan](#)

[WHO's Centre for health development Kobe, Japan](#)



Fukushima: social media

- Constant monitoring of rumours – both in traditional and social media
- Reacting to rumours/claims
 - E.g. salt, seaweed, iodine, drinking water, food
 - E.g. supposed radiation levels, claims of future cancer deaths
- Reinforcing proper public health actions
 - E.g. Japan took correct public health actions in days immediately after the accident, incl. in Japanese

Fukushima: social media media

- Do we need to take potassium iodide (KI) pill? Is it safe for breastfeeding mothers?
- We are expecting a baby, should we evacuate?
- We import a product from Japan, is it safe?
- Should we cancel a championship scheduled to be held in Tokyo?
- What actions are being taken to monitor the safety of food from Japan?
- Should we screen passengers arriving from Japan?



Rumour: iodized salt could prevent the effect of radiation on health

Results for salt

Tweets

Tweets with links

Tweets near you

People



cnnbrk CNN Breaking News

China trying to head off "salt panic" in wake of Japan nuclear crisis.

<http://on.cnn.com/geuDYC>

17 hours ago

Top Tweet



whonews WHO News

Iodized **#salt** doesn't have enough **#iodine** to protect you from **#radiation**. Too much **#iodizedsalt** can cause poisoning. **#japan**
#globalhealth

16 hours ago

Top Tweet



A few days after the first WHO tweets...

Chinese seek refunds as salt panic subsides

(AFP) – Mar 19, 2011  

SHANGHAI — Chinese consumers caught up in panic salt buying in the mistaken belief it would protect against radiation from Japan's nuclear crisis are finding stores are refusing to refund their hoards of salt.

Supermarkets said they were unable to refund purchases of iodised salt, citing rules that say food cannot be returned if it has no quality problems, state media reported Sunday.

Panicked shoppers had set off a run on iodised salt despite government reassurances that China faced no danger from Japan's March 11 earthquake and tsunami, which left the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant leaking radiation.

A 60-year-old Shanghai woman told China Central Television (CCTV) that she called the police after a store refused to give her a refund for 50 packages of salt that she bought last week.



Chinese shoppers crowd a shop in an effort to buy salt in Lanzhou, northwest China's Gansu province

Further WHO tweets on iodine pills, seaweed...



whonews WHO News

Just like **#salt**, **#seaweed** doesn't have enough **#iodine** to protect you from **#radiation** & takes too long to absorb. **#globalhealth**
#japan

4 hours ago

Top Tweet



whonews WHO News

Consult your **#doctor** before taking **#iodide** pills. Do not self-medicate! <http://tiny.cc/qgp4p> **#radiation** **#tsunami** **#japan**
#globalhealth

12 hours ago ☆ Favorite ↻ Retweet ↩ Reply

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whonews WHO News

Read **@whonews** updated Q&As on **#Japan** **#nuclear** concerns
<http://tiny.cc/lj6ii> Reply if you have other Qs **#radiation** **#globalhealth**

13 hours ago ☆ Favorite ↻ Retweet ↩ Reply

Top Tweet



Twitter account of the Japanese Prime Minister's Office



首相官邸

JPN_PMO

@JPN_PMO

This is the official English twitter account of Prime Minister's Office of Japan. Most of the information provided here will be translation of @Kantei_Saigai.
<http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/index-e.html>



首相官邸

JPN_PMO JPN_PMO

WHO website: <http://www.who.int/en/>

20 hours ago



首相官邸

JPN_PMO JPN_PMO

WHO: Japan evac plan is based on pub health expertise. People within 20km shall be evacuated & those btw 20-30km are asked to stay indoors.

20 hours ago

Director of Global Communications at Japanese Prime Minister's Office



Noriyuki SHIKATA ✓

@norishikata Tokyo, Japan

Deputy Cabinet Secretary for Public Relations, Director of Global Communications at Prime Minister's Office of Japan. Worked for Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

<http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/index-e.html>



norishikata Noriyuki SHIKATA

WHO says, in a nuclear power plant accident, the general population is not likely to be exposed to doses high enough to cause acute effects

15 Mar



norishikata Noriyuki SHIKATA

WHO: "The actions proposed by the Government of Japan are in line with the existing recommendations based on public health expertise."

15 Mar



norishikata Noriyuki SHIKATA

WHO FAQs: Japan nuclear concerns

<http://www.who.int/hac/crises/jpn/faqs/en/index.html>

15 Mar



norishikata Noriyuki SHIKATA

WHO: Japanese government taking appropriate protective measures. <http://www.who.int/en/>

15 Mar





**Risk
communications
via social media
is a public
health tool.**

Thank you!



Mats C
@swedeinsf



Follow

@WHO thank you for clarifying - and responding on a Saturday! I really appreciate it!!

Stockholm



Kaplan Medical
@KaplanMedical

1:22 PM - 10 Apr 2012

@WHO Your work is inspiring and noble. Thank you for all you do in public health initiatives, big and small.



3:48 PM - 14 Nov 2013



Irene Kim
@Irene_KF



Follow

@WHO I cannot believe all of these #depression tweets. People are so honest, so brave, to speak up. Thank you!



Dr. Gia Sison
@giasison



Follow

@WHO Thank you for providing essential FAQs on Hepatitis. Very beneficial. We support your advocacy from the Philippines. More power!



12:14 PM - 25 Jul 2012



Sue Atkins
@SueAtkins

@WHO thank you for your helpful info about #dementia sadly my mother in law is now suffering with it



World Health Organization