Cruise Ship Olympic Surveillance System

The Cruise Ship Olympic Surveillance System (CSOSS) is designed to enhance the existing notifiable diseases reporting system, and to actively identify unusual patterns of illness and disease on cruise ships. This surveillance mechanism builds on a reporting system operated by the South Eastern Sydney Public Health Unit and Sydney-based cruise vessel operators.

During the Games, cruise ship medical staff will be requested to complete an Olympic Cruise Ship Daily Medical Report for inclusion into the NSW Department of Health’s OHSS. This daily report outlines the number of passengers on each ship, the number of medical consultations, hospitalisations, deaths and cases with the following specific symptoms and conditions:

- influenza-like illness
- suspected pneumonia
- gastroenteritis.

The summary report forms will be faxed daily to the Department of Health, and analysed and reported through the NSW Health Olympic Coordinating Centre (HOCC). The Olympic Medical Epidemiologist will be notified immediately of any acute health concerns or cases showing unusual symptoms of possible public health significance.

The large number of cruise ships that will converge in Sydney for the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games has presented a unique opportunity to develop and test a comprehensive system for surveillance of health on these vessels. It is hoped that the Sydney experience will inform planning for the next Olympic Games in Athens in 2004, which will be serviced by a much greater number of cruise ships.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Peter Waples is currently participating in the NSW Public Health Officer Training Program. The authors would like to thank Paul Paraskevopoulos for his involvement in developing the cruise ship medical reporting system.

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borne illness during the period that Sydney will host the Games.

Operation Foodwatch is a program of enhanced food hygiene surveillance for food premises in the public domain. Local Councils and Public Health Units throughout greater Metropolitan Sydney report to a centrally-located database, which has been operating since early 1999. The information gathered by this system is used to categorise food premises, based on inspection histories. This information is used to target high risk outlets for more intensive inspection and follow up.

THE SYDNEY 2000 OLYMPIC GAMES PLAN

The Food Safety Strategy for Olympic venues involves the following actions:

- specification of special food hygiene conditions in SOCOG contracts and the highlighting of statutory obligations (for example, contractual obligations placed on Olympic venue caterers include the requirements that Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point, or HACCP, Food Safety Plans be in place);¹
- identification of all contracted food operations located within Olympic venues;
- allocation of a broad food safety risk rating (high, medium or low risk) to each food service outlet, according to whether they are serving potentially hazardous food types;
- coordination of ongoing site inspections and hygiene compliance checks and audits at all venues;
- recording of all food safety surveillance activities and central collation of data including daily summary reporting;
- implementation of the Strategy at test events prior to the Games to trial the inspection process and, if necessary, refine and enhance it.

Some of the key tasks in monitoring venue-based food operations will include:

- ongoing inspections of food premises and outlets to ensure compliance with food hygiene standards
- routine inspection of delivery and distribution vehicles
- selective sampling and testing of foods
- investigation of complaints received from the general public
- active surveillance for food-borne disease outbreaks.

FOOD SAFETY WORKFORCE

The Olympic food safety workforce will be drawn from both local government and NSW Health. Food safety surveillance personnel will implement the actions identified in the Food Safety Strategy for the 15 venues located within Sydney Olympic Park. Local government officers and food inspectors from area health service public health units will carry out food surveillance work in the 14 competition venues within the Sydney East, Darling Harbour and Sydney West Olympic Precincts. This workforce will operate during the pre-Olympic, Olympic and Paralympic periods in September and October 2000.

The detailed planning underpinning the Olympic Food Safety Strategy, and the strong collaborative approach between NSW Health and Local Government in implementing it, should minimise food-borne illnesses during the Games.

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NSW Health is responsible for providing public health services to support Olympic and Paralympic venues under SOCOG’s jurisdiction. These include:

- competition venues
- residential areas:
  - athletes village
  - Olympic ‘Family’ hotels mainly in the central business district of Sydney
  - media village at Lidcombe
  - youth camp at St Joseph’s College at Hunters Hill

COORDINATING PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES AT OLYMPIC VENUES DURING THE SYDNEY 2000 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES

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