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## Report of the Public Online Educational Program for Migrants about COVID-19

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Report

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# Report of the Public Online Educational Program for Migrants about COVID-19

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## 在日外国人向け COVID-19オンライン教育プログラムの実施報告

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### [Abstract]

The outbreak of the 2019 sars-cov-2 virus creating the COVID-19 disease killed a huge number of people and affected people's daily lives. Under the condition that little was understood about the new virus, people kept seeking the latest information to protect themselves from COVID-19. Unfortunately, the information about COVID-19 in foreign languages for migrants was limited. When the government introduced the health service provision system for COVID-19 to provide health care according to the priority, migrants hardly understood how to access the health services regarding COVID-19. The authors were requested by the Catholic Tokyo International Center to provide information about COVID-19 for migrants living in Japan. The educational program was developed based on the information needs of migrants. The online educational program about 'COVID-19 management' was conducted in 2020, and a program about 'COVID-19 vaccination' followed in 2021. The migrants needed information about health services regarding COVID-19 in Japan and an opportunity to ask their questions to health professionals.

[Key words] COVID-19, Health literacy, Migrant, Educational program

### [要旨]

新型コロナウイルス感染症（COVID-19）の世界的流行は、多数の死者を出したばかりでなく、人々の生活を一変させた。新しい感染症である COVID-19については未明なことが多い状況下で、人々は感染から身を守るために、最新の情報を探し求めた。残念ながら、COVID-19に関する在日外国人向けの外国語による情報は限られていた。COVID-19に関して、優先度に応じて受診するシステムを政府が打ち出した際、多くの外国人が受診方法を理解できなかった。著者らは、カトリック東京国際センターより、COVID-19に関する情報提供を求められたことから、在日外国人の情報ニーズをもとに教育プログラムを開発した。

2020年に「COVID-19に関する対処方法」、2021年に「COVID-19ワクチン」に関するプログラムをオンラインで実施した。在日外国人は、特に日本における COVID-19に関する医療サービス情報と、医療従事者に質問する機会を必要としていた。

[キーワード] 新型コロナ感染症、ヘルスリテラシー、在日外国人、教育プログラム

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## I. Introduction

Sars-cov-19 virus disease (COVID-19) emerged and quickly spread around the world from late 2019<sup>1)</sup>. Until vaccination was developed, there were no specific controls to prevent disease, and specific drugs were not yet developed to treat disease. Controlling the infection has been the main mitigating measure to fight against COVID-19. People need information about Sars-cov-19 in order to protect themselves from getting COVID-19. Providing the right information about COVID-19 could reduce the risk of infection. Local governments ordered citizens to obey strict quarantine measures, and medical professionals in the media advised the public to enact prevention behaviors such as wearing masks, keeping a distance with people and so on. Naturally, those orders and information affected people's self-care and prevention behaviors. On the other hand, there was also information about COVID-19 such as garlic consumption as a preventive measure that was not adopted by standard medical care<sup>2)</sup>. Furthermore, health services system for COVID-19 was introduced according to health care priority. The complicated procedure for PCR test requests was confusing and caused anxiety among citizens.

There are about 2.9 million migrants living in Japan<sup>3)</sup>. Migrants have challenges accessing health care. Communication has been a major barrier. Japanese language that uses Japanese characters cause barriers for migrants in communication and getting information. It has been reported that migrants had trouble accessing the appropriate health care and communicating with Japanese health professionals<sup>4)</sup>. In 2020, when we had a rapid increase of COVID-19 cases, relevant information was announced in Japanese first and followed by English. Migrants who did not understand Japanese could hardly access the information about COVID-19 to protect themselves and their family from the disease. The Catholic Tokyo International Center requested the authors to provide information about how to cope with COVID-19 for the migrant groups living in Japan in May 2020. The authors developed educational programs for the migrants living in Japan and conducted them in cooperation with the migrant groups. This study reports on the public online educational program for migrants about COVID-19 management in 2020, as well as about COVID-19 vaccination in 2021.

## II. Development of the programs

According to the questions and requests from the migrants, the contents of the program were developed. The information about available health services by local governments were collected from the website of the local governments and the availability was checked. Original culturally appropriate illustrations were developed.

## III. Announcement and implementation of the program

The coordinator of the migrant group developed a flyer and distributed it to the migrants living in Japan. The programs were conducted online using Zoom. The program about COVID-19 management was conducted on July 25 and August 29, 2020, and the program about COVID-19 vaccination was conducted on May 22, 2021.

## IV. Contents of the program about COVID-19 management

### 1. How to prevent COVID-19 disease (PPT1)

Sars-cov-19 virus infects a person through the air when an infected person speaks loudly or coughs.

#### 1) Wearing mask

Wearing a mask is effective to reduce the risk of spreading the virus. An infected person must put on a mask to save other people.

#### 2) Keeping distance from a person or crowd

Sars-cov-19 virus infects a person through the air. Inhaling the air containing Sars-cov-19 may cause the infection. It is safer to keep a distance from people and



PPT1. How to prevent COVID-19 disease

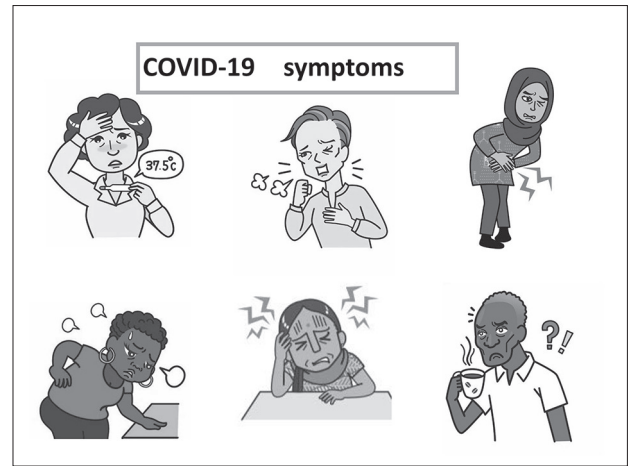
crowds. Eating, drinking, or speaking without a mask on within a crowd are not recommended.

3) Washing hands

The virus may exist in public spaces or on items. Avoid touching your face in public space and wash your hands as often as possible.

2. Symptoms of COVID-19 (PPT2)

As common symptoms of COVID-19, fever, cough, breathlessness, headache, stomachache, abnormal or inability to smell, and abnormal or inability to taste have been reported.

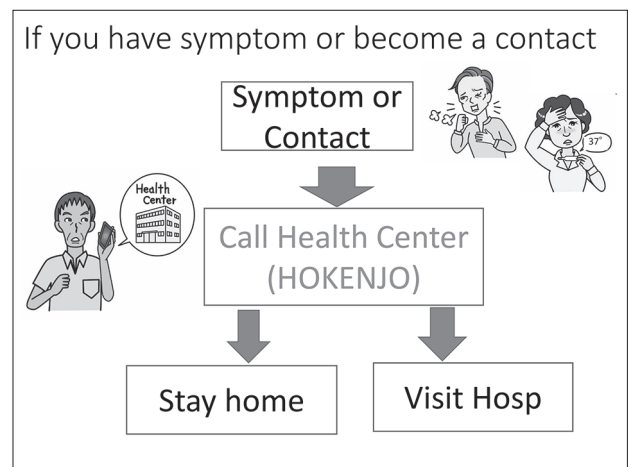


PPT2. Symptom of COVID-19

3. What to do when you or your family have symptoms of COVID-19 or become a contact. (PPT3)

Those coming in contact with COVID-19 patients or people with symptoms can call the health center of the residential area. The nurse will ask for your name, address, symptoms and when it started and history of contact with a COVID-19 patient. Inform the nurse if you have: 1) breathlessness or fatigue and 2) history of asthma, diabetes, heart disease and other high risk conditions.

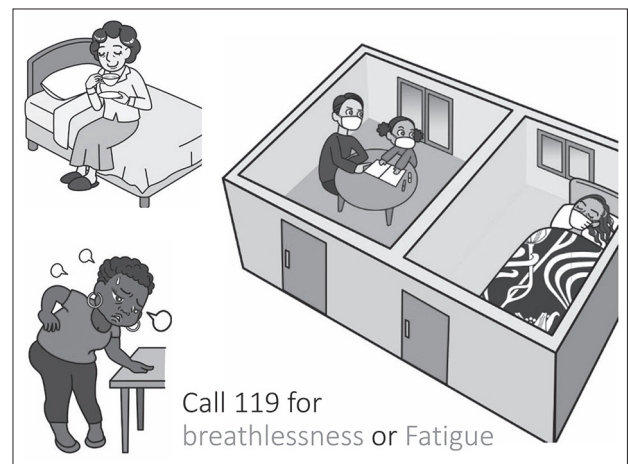
The nurse will instruct you to either go to the hospital or stay home. When you are advised to visit the hospital, bring your health insurance card, medicine booklet with medicines you are taking, a mask and money. It is a good idea to prepare your health history including major disease history, allergy, smoking history and current health problems with a list of medication currently taking.



PPT3. How to visit a hospital

4. How to stay at home with symptoms (PPT4)

When you are advised to stay home, take a good rest. Stay away from your family, and wear a mask when you talk to them. In case you have breathlessness or fatigue, call 119.



PPT4. How to stay at home with symptoms

V. Contents of the program about COVID-19 vaccination in 2021

1. Current situation of COVID-19

The number of patients with COVID-19 is rising and specific medications have not been developed. Even though the majority of patients survive, many people have died of COVID-19.

2. Benefit and risk of vaccination

Several vaccines are developed and being examined. The available vaccine by Pfizer is quite safe and effective to prevent infection. On the other hand, COVID-19 can cause serious consequences. Israel promoted vaccination and succeeded in reducing infection. The benefit of vaccination is higher compare to the risk associated

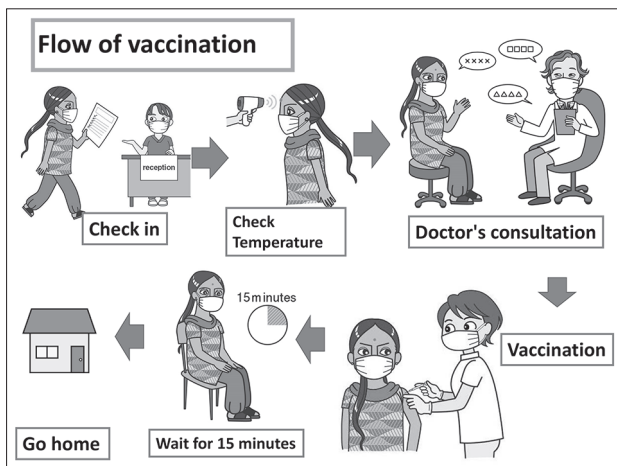
with having COVID-19.

### 3. How to get vaccinated (PPT5)

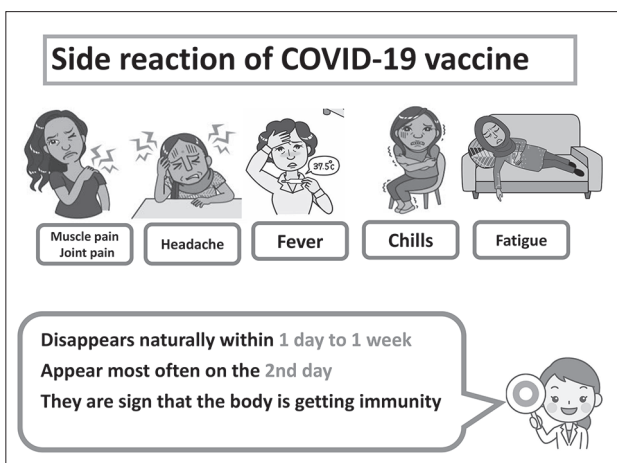
When you receive the coupon for the vaccination, make a booking for vaccination at a listed hospital. Get advice from your doctor if you have health problems. When you visit a hospital for your vaccination, wear short sleeves, bring the coupon, medicine booklet, and health insurance card. After taking your temperature, filling out the form and doctor's consultation, you will get an injection to your shoulder. After 15 minutes observation, you can go home.

### 4. Side effects of vaccination (PPT6)

Fever, headache, muscle pain, fatigue and chills are reported as side effects of the vaccination. They will resolve within a few days. Acetaminophen such as "Caronal" can be taken to break the fever.



PPT5. Flow of vaccination



PPT6. Side effects of vaccination

## VI. Results

### 1. Participants

For the program about COVID-19 management in 2020, more than 100 migrants participated. For the program about COVID-19 vaccination in 2021, 60 people attended. Majority of the participants were Filipino living in Japan.

### 2. Questions from the participants

#### 1) COVID-19 management

Q1. Is it possible or true that the coming vaccine will kill people and will lead to a decrease in the world population?

A1. No. Historically, vaccines have contributed to saving lives. Any vaccine will be carefully examined before being applied.

Q2. Is walking for an hour with a mask safe?

A2. If you walk with a good tight fitting mask for about 20 minutes, you may experience a breathing problem or a heart problem. We advise to walk in open air with social distance. Virus will disappear without infection capability.

Q3. Are there any differences of effect between the masks with different materials?

A3. Gauze is less effective than a surgical mask to protect from Sars-cov-19 virus, however, it is easier to breath. Basically, wearing a mask is not perfect to protect you from the virus. It reduces the risk of infection. We suggest you to take other measure too, such as washing hands or avoiding crowd.

Q4. Are vegetables in the supermarket safe?

A4. You can wash them.

#### 2) COVID-19 vaccination

Q1. Is it OK to get COVID-19 vaccination if I have allergies (e.g. pollen, hay fever, medicine, skin allergy, etc.) ?

A1. Yes. Ministry of Health has stated that people with allergies, such as hay fever, asthma or atopic dermatitis, can get vaccinated. Incidence of anaphylaxis by COVID-19 vaccination in Japan is 37/1,000,000. There are no reported deaths by anaphylaxis of COVID-19 vaccination in Japan. Please inform the medical staff if you have a history of anaphylaxis by other kinds of vaccines. For your safety, stay in the vaccination site for 15 minutes for observation. Treatment for anaphylaxis is quickly available in the vaccination site.

Q2. I have a history of cancer. Can I get the COVID-19

vaccination?

A2. Yes. However, if you have important treatment such as chemotherapy, we advise you to ask your doctor about the best timing of vaccination.

Q3. I was infected with COVID-19 before. Do I have to get vaccinated?

A3. Yes. There are reports that infected people got COVID-19 again. We recommend to get vaccinated.

Q4. Can I get vaccinated for COVID-19 and influenza at the same time?

A4. Yes.

Q5. I did not have side effects from COVID-19 vaccination. Am I protected?

A5. Yes. A lack of side effects does not mean the vaccine is not working.

Q6. Do I need to wear a mask after being fully vaccinated?

A6. Yes. Keep taking precautions in public places or when you are with unvaccinated people.

### 3. Feedback from the participants

The participants provided high marks for the programs. They commented that the programs met their information needs and were easy to understand. They appreciated the Q&A section most because there was little opportunity to ask physicians questions or express concerns in English.

## VI. Discussion

### 1. Information needs about COVID-19 of migrants

Migrants managed to collect basic knowledge about COVID-19 from family and friends in Japan or overseas. However, for migrants it was difficult to access the information about available health service in Japan unless they understood Japanese. The information migrants requested was mainly about how to access the health services in Japan. Also, migrants looked for the opportunity to ask their questions and express concerns to health professionals to integrate their knowledge into their health behavior, especially due to the uncertainty of current knowledge about COVID-19. As Abel & McQueen reported, it is challenging for people to integrate the sea of information into personal behavioral actions<sup>5)</sup>. When providing the opportunity to ask questions to health professionals or receive health information, it is recommended to include examples of questions and answers.

### 2. Multilingual information delivery system for migrants is needed

In May 2020, little was known about COVID-19, and the procedure for visiting hospitals for COVID-19 that the Japanese government announced was complicated. The health services policy by local governments changed frequently. Some local governments provided telephone consultation in English and other languages. However, local governments could not update the latest information for migrants in English and other languages. As a result, migrants were short of information about COVID-19. There is an urgent challenge to be achieved to develop the multilingual information delivery system for migrants.

## VIII. Conclusion

A series of educational programs about COVID-19 were developed for the migrants living in Japan and conducted by Zoom in 2020 and 2021. The migrants needed the information about health services regarding COVID-19 in Japan and appreciated the opportunity to ask their questions directly to health professionals.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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