Supporting health authorities and event organizers in the context of the current monkeypox outbreak in the WHO European Region

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Interim advice for public health authorities on summer events during the monkeypox outbreak in Europe, 2022

AIM

- Provide concise advice to public health authorities and guide their prevention, behaviour change interventions before, during and after upcoming summer events.
- This guidance also includes sections which can be used to formulate advice to business/venue owners and event organizers, as well as participants themselves.
- All advice can be adapted to the local context and the relevant audience and translated into national languages, as required.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Public health authorities at national, regional or local level in the WHO European Region including countries of the European Union/European Economic Area (EU/EEA)







Interim advice for public health authorities on summer events during the monkeypox outbreak in Europe, 2022

Joint report by World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe and European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

14 June 2022

Background

Since 13 May 2022, multiple cases of monkeypox have been reported by Member States of the WHO European Region that are not endemic for monkeypox virus, including countries of the European Union/European Econoceae (EU/EEA) and beyond [1,21]. These recently disponsed monkeypox cases have been identified primarily but not exclusively among men who have sex with men (MSH). Human-to-human transmission of monkeypox occurs through close contact with infectious material from skin lesions of an infected person, through respiratory droplets in prolonged face-to-face contact and through formiss (e.g. linems, bedding, sex toxys, dothing) [2,3].

As the pandemic restrictions related to international travel and mass quitherings have been lifted in many European countries, a large number of mass gatherings including music, culture festivals or Pride events are planned, that will bring together young, international participants during the summer months. In addition, party events and other spontaneous gatherings are likely to take place in touristic settings (e.g. hotel/beach parties, etc.) during the summer holding sensor.

Large gatherings may represent a conducive environment for the transmission of the monkeypox virus if they entail close, prolonged and frequent interactions among people, in particular sexual activity. Moreover, in recent relars, outbreaks of other infectious diseases, including among MSM (e.g., hepatitis A, meningtis), can be linked to travel abroad and social and mass gathering events [4,5]. However, lessons from outbreaks spread through social and sexual networks have shown that cancelling organised gatherings is likely to be counterproductive to disease control efforts. Venue closure or event cancellation does not reduce sexual contacts but rather shifts the activities to other settings, including private parties, which are less accessible to community outreach or public health interventions. Liaising with commercial venues and events is more feasible and efficient tham mapping private parties [6]. Engacing with populations through the organised events represents a powerful opportunity. By working with organisers of events, the risks related to monkeypox can be communicated and clear, practical, targeted information provided to attendese. Engagement and partnering with gay, bisexual and other MSN is essential to develop responses that are accepted and promoted by the members of these population groups. As such, appropriate actions and community consultation linked to mass gatherings and other events can help control the spread of monkeypox.

Aim

The aim of this document is to provide concise advice to public health authorities and guide their prevention, awareness-raising and behaviour change interventions before, during and after upcoming summer events. This will enable them to maximise opportunities for disseminating reliable information, advice and practical guidance to participants and minimise the public health risk from monkeypox. Although the main focus is monkeypox in the context of the current multi-country outbreak, much of the advice addresses good public health practices in general which may help prevent the transmission of a number of infectious diseases (e.g., EV), sexually transmitted infections (STIs), etc.). This guidance also includes sections which can be used to formulate advice to business/venue owners and event organisers, as well as participants themselves. All advice can be adapted to the local context and the relevant audience and translated into national languages, as required.

WHO EURO/ ECDC Support toolkit for health authorities and event organizers

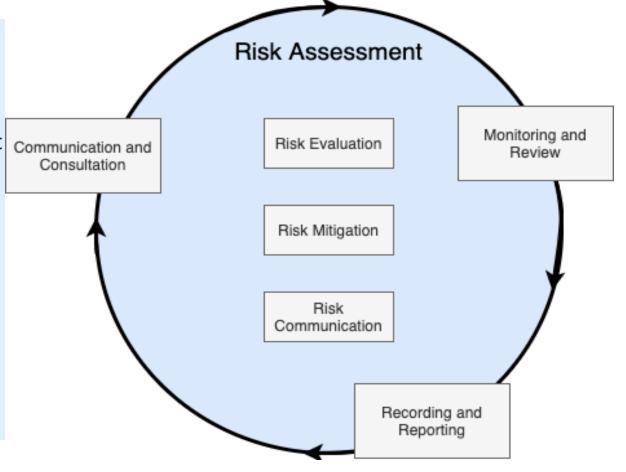
WHO EURO & ECDC will be launching a resource toolkit which includes technical guidance, trainings and ready-to-use materials to support health authorities and event organizers to prepare for upcoming large/mass gathering events

TARGET AUDIENCE

<u>Primary</u>: Event organizing committees; health

authorities, business & venue owners

Secondary: event participants





Components of resource toolkit

Risk Assessment Tool for large/mass events

- Evaluation of likelihood and impact of hazard
- Mass gathering preparedness plan development

Event- based surveillance

- Joint WHO EURO- ECDC surveillance bulletin
- Epidemic Intelligence from Open Sources
- Disease Outbreak News (DON)

Contact Tracing

- WHO interim guidance: Surveillance, case investigation and contact tracing for Monkeypox
- Go.data

Early warning and response (EWARS)

- EWARS technical guidance
- Go.Data.
- EWARs in a Box

Risk Communication & Community Engagement

 guidance and materials for event organizers before, during and after an event



Infection Prevention and Control & Clinical Management

 Clinical management and infection prevention and control for monkeypox: Interim rapid response guidance

Online trainings

EIOSRA Tool

Legacy and evaluation

• Event Evaluation (IAR/AAR)

RCCE at the core of monkeypox response

The complexities of the monkeypox outbreak in Europe call for a response that integrates risk communication with community engagement interventions to engage diverse populations based on their risk of exposure by:

- ensuring timely and consistent health information and advice to broader populations
- using more directed channels to high-risk groups through two-way communications
- working with relevant civil society organizations to leverage the trust they have to ensure at-risk groups are empowered in prevention behaviour.





Interim advice on Risk Communication and Community Engagement during the monkeypox outbreak in Europe, 2022

Joint report by WHO Regional office for Europe/ECDC

2 June 2022

Introduction

Recent health emergencies in the European Region have highlighted Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) as a core public health intervention which contributes to emergency response. Risk Communication and Community Engagement is a key measure available to health authorities to enable at-risk or affected communities to take informed decisions to protect their health, particularly when there is no vaccine and little in the way of treatment available. As such, RCCE is instrumental to achieve results across all the main areas of the response, from laboratory testing, contact tracing and isolation, to treatment and preventative and protective measures. For all these measures, support from affected communities is crucial for their success.

Scope and audience

This document is intended for health authorities working on RCCE in the context of the current monkeypox outbreak in Europe. It provides advice on approaches to the communication of risks and engagement of population groups based on the outbreak's epidemiology and context, recommended preventive measures and people's perceptions and behaviour.

The complexities of the monkeypox outbreak and context in Europe call for a comprehensive response that integrates risk communication with community engagement strategies to engage diverse audiences based on their risk of exposure. This mostly points at ensuring timely and consistent health information and advice to broader populations, while using more direct channels and engagement to those at increased risk through two-way communication.

10 Risk Communication tips



- 1. Identify target groups relevant to the monkeypox outbreak in Europe.
- 2. Raise a level of **concern** proportionate to the risk of different population groups.
- 3. Tailor risk communication through **channels** that target group(s) use (1).
- 4. Identify **spokespersons** who the affected population groups trust.
- 5. Explain the **science** simply, to foster trust and acceptance.
- 6. Acknowledge **uncertainty**, by labelling public health advice as preliminary.
- 7. Recognize **people's fatigue** for restrictions as a barrier to their compliance with health advice.
- 8. Package messages and health advice relevant to specific settings and circumstances.
- 9. Provide public health advice specific to the monkeypox outbreak.
- 10. Use **pictures** of monkeypox symptoms to increase understanding, but not generate fear.
- (1) Targeted channels: Mass gatherings, Dating apps, Social networking apps, nightlife bars or sex clubs, health clinics sexual health service, Universities.

Civil Society Engagement

- 50 CSOs working on HIV, STIs and at-risk groups convened
- Informal Working Group established with few CSOs on social listening and collaboration
- Co-designing, testing and deploying a toolkit for event organizers
- Feedback and amplification of health information and advice
- Outreach to at-risk population groups minimizing stigmatization
- Participation of CSOs at WHO press conference and Facebook live to reinforce messaging



EuroPride • EPOA ❖ @EuroPride · 1h :

iii Monkeypox Update 1/2 iii

Together with @DrWillN, @TeamPrepster and @TheLoveTankCIC we have published guidance on #monkeypox for event organisers. In line with @WHO guidance, #Pride *** and other events are opportunities for public health messaging.



epoa.eu Monkeypox: information for Pride organisers



Enjoy the festival season safely

- This summer over 800 festivals are expected to take place across Europe bringing together many hundreds of thousands of people from different countries.
- Most attendees are highly mobile and sexually active people and a number of them will have intimate, skin-to-skin contact at or around these events. Some may have multiple sexual contacts including with new or anonymous partners.
- Without action, we risk seeing a surge of monkeypox cases in Europe this summer.
- Monkeypox is not a reason to cancel events, but an opportunity to leverage them to drive our engagement with communities, event organizers and dating apps to provide clear information to raise awareness about monkeypox infection and strengthen individual and community protection.
- From past events we have learnt that mass gatherings do not amplify transmission by themselves, it is the behaviour during events that matters.



A communication tool kit created for event organizers

Working with community groups, event organizers, ECDC and WHO will be launching guidance and ready-to-use materials to enable event organizers to deliver accurate and timely messaging, **before**, **during and after** an event:

- 1. The role you have in protecting people from monkeypox
- 2. The steps you can take
 - 1. Messages to share with participants, before, during and after the event
 - 2. Questions and Answers on symptoms, transmission and protective measures
- 3. The messages you can share
- 4. The multimedia tools you can use
- 5. The community actors you can engage
 - 1. Tips on mapping Civil Society Organizations & other community actors
- 6. The resources you can consult



"The best way to think about it is about the journey that someone goes on through their interaction with your event, whether that begins with social media or with media interviews, [..] and also aftercare, so that after the event you're sharing information, so people know how to engage and where to get help"

Steve Taylor, Director, London Pride Organizers Association

Key messages

Before the event



During the event

Ifter the event



✓ Event organizers

Co-developed with:

✓ ECDC

World Health Organization

✓ UK HSA

✓ WHO Technical Units



UK Health Security Agency



Swipe right and follow the health advice to protect yourself and others from















European Region

Next steps

- Produce targeted RCCE products pre-, during and post events and festivals, including for a more general audience
- Test messages and materials with key target groups
- Strengthen partnerships with CSOs and health partners through regular meetings and updates
- Broaden partnership to universities for students' outreach
- Produce case studies on best practice from festivals/mass gatherings so far to learn from best practice



Thank you

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