

**Questionnaire on
“Measures relating to Personal Protective Equipment
during Outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome”**

1. Introduction

1.1 The Select Committee appointed to inquire into the handling of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak by the Government and the Hospital Authority (HA) has requested that, in connection with its inquiry, you answer the questions in this questionnaire.

1.2 On 17 November 2003, HA forwarded to the Select Committee four versions of the “Frequently Asked Questions on the Management of Severe Community-Acquired Pneumonia” (FAQs) and 23 versions of the “Guideline on Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome” issued from 21 February 2003 to 30 June 2003 by the HA Head Office (HAHO) to HA hospitals¹³. The questions in this questionnaire are raised on the basis of the information contained in the aforementioned FAQs and Guidelines. The period covered by this questionnaire is between 21 February 2003 and 23 June 2003, and the peak of the SARS outbreak mentioned in this questionnaire is between 13 March 2003 and 30 April 2003.

1.3 You should consult HA employees at various ranks in your hospital before completing this questionnaire.

The Questionnaire

2. Number of employees

2.1 How many HA employees worked in your hospital at the peak of the SARS outbreak?

¹³ The dates of the four FAQs issued by HAHO were 21 February 2003, 28 February 2003, 7 March 2003 and 12 March 2003. The dates of the 23 guidelines issued by HAHO were 19 March 2003, 20 March 2003, 24 March 2003, 27 March 2003, 3 April 2003, 6 April 2003, 10 April 2003, 15 April 2003, 17 April 2003, 22 April 2003, 25 April 2003, 29 April 2003, 30 April 2003, 6 May 2003, 7 May 2003, 12 May 2003, 15 May 2003, 21 May 2003, 22 May 2003, 9 June 2003, 26 June 2003, 28 June 2003 and 30 June 2003.

2.2 Were there any HA employees working in your hospital who were infected with SARS; and if so, how many? Please provide a breakdown by rank.

2.3 How many contractors' employees worked in your hospital at the peak of the SARS outbreak?

2.4 Were there any contractors' employees working in your hospital who were infected with SARS; and if so, how many? Please provide a breakdown by job title.

3. Dissemination of guidelines on infection control measures in hospitals

3.1 On top of the four FAQs and 23 Guidelines issued by HAHO mentioned in paragraph 1.2, did you or the management of your hospital issue any additional guidelines or instructions to the employees in your hospital? If yes, please provide:

- (a) the reasons why you issued the additional instructions or guidelines over and above the FAQs and Guidelines issued by HAHO to the HA employees working in your hospital; and
- (b) copies of the guidelines or instructions you issued.

3.2 What measures were taken to make available and accessible the guidelines or instructions issued by HAHO and your hospital to the employees in your hospital?

4. Non-compliance with guidelines

4.1 Were there any incidents of non-compliance with the guidelines or instructions on infection control measures issued by HAHO and your hospital during the SARS outbreak? If yes, please state:

- (a) the specific guidelines or instructions that were not complied with;
- (b) the period(s) during the SARS outbreak when the guidelines or instructions were not complied with;
- (c) the number of incidents of such non-compliance;
- (d) the causes for the incidents of non-compliance in (c);

- (e) whether such incidents and their causes were reported to HAHO, and if yes, when and how; and
- (f) actions taken, if any, to rectify the situation.

5. Infection control measures - wearing of personal protective equipment (PPE)

5.1 Were the infection control measures concerning the wearing of PPE adopted for the employees in high risk areas and non-high risk areas in your hospital different? If yes, please state:

- (a) the differences; and
- (b) the period(s) during which there were such differences.

6. Supply and distribution of PPE

6.1 Were there times when your hospital had less than seven days of supply of any of the following PPE:

- (a) gloves;
- (b) disposable gowns, water repellent;
- (c) disposable gowns, fluid resistant;
- (d) goggles;
- (e) eye shields;
- (f) face shields;
- (g) shoe covers;
- (h) N95 masks:
 - (i) small; and
 - (ii) regular;
- (i) N100 masks; and
- (j) surgical masks?

6.2 For each of the answers to Q6.1 which is affirmative,

- (a) was HAHO notified of such shortage;

- (b) if the answer to (a) is affirmative, what subsequent actions were taken by HAHO, if any, to rectify the situation prior to the commencement of central procurement of PPE; and
- (c) did your hospital attempt to acquire additional PPE to meet the shortage of PPE in your hospital after the commencement of central procurement?

6.3 Excluding cases of shortages, were there employees in your hospital whose requests for any of the PPE listed in Q6.1 were turned down? If yes, please state:

- (a) the number of employees in your hospital whose requests of such nature were turned down;
- (b) the equipment which was requested but turned down;
- (c) the names and ranks of the persons who made the decisions to turn down the requests;
- (d) the dates on which such requests were turned down; and
- (e) the reasons why the requests were turned down.

6.4 Did your hospital receive any complaints from the employees about unavailability of PPE? If yes, please state:

- (a) the number of complaints received;
- (b) the equipment which was not available; and
- (c) actions taken, if any, to rectify the situation.

6.5 Were there any occasions on which employees in your hospital were not allowed to put on any of the PPE listed in Q6.1 while on duty? If yes, for each occasion, please state:

- (a) the date on which the employee(s) was not allowed to put on PPE;
- (b) the reason why the employee(s) was not allowed to put on PPE;
- (c) whether the employee(s) concerned was subsequently infected with SARS; and
- (d) whether there was any change to the guidelines or instructions on PPE to rectify the situation. If yes, how and when were the guidelines or instructions changed?

6.6 Were there any occasions on which requests from employees in your hospital to put on their own PPE, which was considered to be offering a higher level of protection than what was laid down in the guidelines and instructions issued by HAHO in force at the time when such requests were made, had been turned down? If yes, for each occasion, please state

- (a) the date on which such requests were turned down;
- (b) the reason why such requests were turned down;
- (c) whether the employee(s) concerned was subsequently infected with SARS; and
- (d) whether there was any change to the guidelines or instructions on PPE to allow more latitude over the wearing of PPE. If yes, what changes were made to the guidelines or instructions in question?

6.7 When HAHO issued/revised guidelines relating to PPE to require HA employees to put on mandatory or recommended PPE while on duty, was there adequate supply of PPE in your hospital? If not, were there any actions taken to rectify the situation?

6.8 Were there any allegations of abuse of the use of PPE in your hospital? If yes, did you take any actions to rectify the situation; and if so, what actions did you take?

6.9 Had you requested other hospitals to transfer any of the PPE listed in Q6.1 to your hospital? If yes, please state:

- (a) the equipment requested;
- (b) the reasons why you had made the requests; and
- (c) the responses from other hospitals.

6.10 Had you been requested by HAHO or other hospitals to transfer any of the PPE listed in Q6.1 to other hospitals? If yes, please state:

- (a) the equipment requested;
- (b) the reasons why the requests had been made; and
- (c) your responses to such requests.

7. Contractors' employees

7.1 Prior to the SARS outbreak, who was responsible for providing training on infection control measures for your contractors' employees? If the responsibility rested with the contractor(s), were there any measures in place in your hospital to monitor the provision and effectiveness of such training?

7.2 For the training referred to in Q7.1, please state the frequency and types of the training.

7.3 Prior to the SARS outbreak, who was responsible for equipping your contractors' employees with PPE? If the responsibility rested with the contractor(s), were there any measures in place in your hospital to monitor the provision of PPE for the contractors' employees and its use?

7.4 During the SARS outbreak, who was responsible for providing training on infection control measures for your contractors' employees? If the responsibility rested with the contractor(s), were there any measures in place in your hospital to monitor the provision and effectiveness of such training?

7.5 For the training referred to in Q7.4, please state the date(s) of commencement, frequency and types of the training.

7.6 During the SARS outbreak, who was responsible for equipping your contractors' employees with PPE? If the responsibility rested with the contractor(s), were there any measures in place in your hospital to monitor the provision of PPE for the contractors' employees and its use?

7.7 During the SARS outbreak, were there occasions on which your contractors' employees were not equipped with the same standard of PPE as that for HA employees? If yes, for each occasion, please state:

- (a) the reason why your contractors' employees were not equipped with the same standard of PPE as that for HA employees;
- (b) whether the contractors' employee(s) concerned was subsequently infected with SARS; and
- (c) whether any actions were taken to rectify the situation; and if so, what actions were taken.