

An Observation on the Development and Potential Impacts of the International Health Regulations 2005

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Abstract

The International Health Regulations 2005 (IHR 2005) is the only legal treaty that under the World Health Organization that aims to deal with and control the international spread of infectious diseases. To ensure the implementation of the IHR 2005 can maximize the protection of people against the international spread of diseases and minimize interference with world travel and trade, under the IHR2005, State Parties have obligations to build national capacity for routine preventive measures as well as to detect and respond to public health emergencies of international concern.

To review the development of IHR 2005 and address some of the potential impacts of this international treaty, this paper is divided into three parts. The first part provides the backgrounds of recent emerged international spreads of infectious diseases, such as AIDS, SARS and birds flu to indicate the need of a new IHR. The rules and mechanisms applied in the IHR 2005 are focused in the second part. Finally, the author selects three potential defeats or impacts of the IHR 2005, such as the loophole of the IHR 2005 in terms of membership/universal application and sovereignty over the virus at issue, as well as the conflicts that may brought by the rules concerning additional health measures.

Keywords: International Health Regulations, public health, infectious diseases, additional health measures, universal application

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