

A Quantitative Study on the Classification of Infectious Disease Policies in China

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Abstract: Since infectious diseases spread extensively in 2019, infectious disease prevention and control policies play an extremely important role in China, and Chinese government has introduced a series of policies to prevent and control infectious diseases. Although these policies work effectively in many aspects, there still exists some problems at the initial stage of infectious diseases and in the implementation of policies by local governments. This paper adopts quantitative analysis with searching keywords of policies to conduct a comprehensive analysis of infectious disease policies, and also proposes three suggestions according to results of the policies analysis in the hope of improving China's prevention and control policies.

Keywords: Infectious Diseases; Policy; China, Medical; Prevention and Control

Introduction

Since the outbreak of infectious diseases happened on 19 December 2019, which is highly contagious, highly concealed, fast-spreading and widespread, posing a threat to the lives and safety of the general public, social and economic development. But due to factors such as medical technology and the prevention and control guidelines and policies of other countries around the world, the prevention and control of infectious diseases has entered a phase of normalization^[1] in order to ensure the normal production and life of the people and the healthy development of the economy. The national government continues to introduce new policies for the prevention and control of infectious diseases, yet there is no independent database for public health management^[2]. By reviewing policy literature, it is possible to classify and quantitatively study and analyse China's infectious disease prevention and control policies^[3], which can reveal the essence of China's infectious disease prevention and control policies, and also facilitate the identification of existing problems in China's infectious disease prevention and control policies and put forward corresponding suggestions on policy improvement and development directions.

2. Materials and methods

2.1 Literature search method

The keyword search method was adopted. Take "infectious diseases", "pneumonia infectious diseases", "novel coronavirus" as search terms, search them in the relevant series of policy documents from December 19, 2019 to August 15, 2021 in the document library of the State Council on the official website of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China and the normative documents on the official website of the National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China, and download them uniformly.

2.2 Criteria for document adoption and exclusion

Adoption criteria: (1) Time interval: a series of policy documents issued from 19 December 2019 to the present (2) Literature sources: central policy documents on infectious diseases issued by the State Council and its subordinate departments, which include

circulars, guidelines, announcements, etc.

Exclusion criteria: (1) duplication of literature: interpretative documents for previously issued policies (2) exclusion of policy documents not issued by the central government, e.g. local policies on prevention and control of infectious diseases: Guidelines for Prevention and Control of New Coronary Pneumonia Epidemic in Sichuan Province (6th edition).^[4]

2.3 Data extraction and collation analysis

All downloaded policy documents were coded, entered and statistically analysed, and the names of policy documents, release dates, release authorities, document nature and policy contents were extracted by means of manual fine reading, and the policies were roughly classified and summarised for the first time for processing. Then, on the basis of the first round of collation, the core content of the policy is interpreted, analysed, summarised and summarised, and the subjects or areas targeted by the policy are dug deeper, and they are meticulously classified and the number of policies is counted.^[3]

3. Policy analysis results

3.1 Basic features of the included policy documents

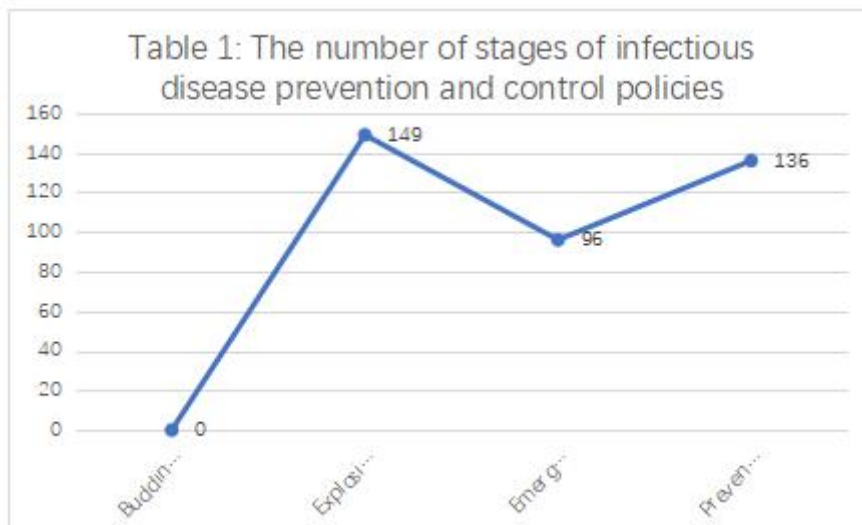
A total of 984 relevant policies were retrieved from the official website, including 608 from the official website of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China: 16 relevant documents of the Central Government, 91 documents of the State Council, 501 explanations of policies related to infectious diseases; 376 from the National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China, and 18 cartoon illustrations of policies to accompany the publicity. After two rounds of screenings and sorting, a total of 381 policy documents and 18 cartoon illustrations were included to promote prevention and control of infectious diseases and disseminate related knowledge at the initial stage.

The first category is the policy on infectious diseases in relation to medical institutions, which is subdivided into 21 branches; the second category is for the national policy on the prevention and control of infectious diseases \ social affairs, which contains three sections on the prevention and control of infectious diseases at the grassroots level, the disinfection of public places during infectious diseases and the management of biological laboratories. The third category is for vulnerable groups, which is mainly about policies related to the elderly, children, adolescents, women, ex-servicemen and mental patients, etc. The fourth category is enterprises, where the government mainly provides policy support to enterprises in terms of internal and external enterprises (import and export), enterprises resuming work and production, small and micro enterprises and individual entrepreneurs, etc. The fifth category is about the employment and social security of workers. It provides policy support to help workers stabilize employment, wages and social insurance, etc.. The sixth category is on inland transportation \ customs, controlling the movement of people within the country and the importation of people or goods from abroad, emphasizing "the focus on external prevention of importation and internal prevention of rebound, to maintain a continuous positive situation in the prevention and control of infectious diseases in China".^[5] The seventh category is charitable donations, infectious disease outbreaks and emergency phase, other domestic provinces and regions and overseas supplies and funds donated to Wuhan and other areas. And the eighth category is poverty eradication and rural agriculture, due to the sudden outbreak of infectious diseases, in order to ensure the full completion of the task of poverty eradication as scheduled introduced some support policies as well as to ensure normal agricultural production and life. The ninth category is education, which is mainly aimed at schools, students and teachers to ensure normal and safe curriculum education. The tenth is urban and rural construction and environmental protection, to ensure safe construction in the field of construction in the context of the epidemic and to do a good job in regulating medical and urban wastewater to prevent the further spread of the epidemic. The eleventh category refers to some illegal acts occurred during the period of infectious disease pneumonia. The twelfth category is food and catering safety, which gives the people some dietary advice on preventing and fighting infectious viruses and maintaining good health.

3.2 The role of government policies in the prevention and control of infectious diseases by issuing multi-body and multi-disciplinary policies

As this infectious disease is a sudden major public health event, the development of infectious diseases can be divided into four stages as of now: budding, outbreak, prevention and control, and normalization.^[6] The policies introduced in these four stages were

issued at short notice in response to what was needed at the time and were time-sensitive and acute in nature.



4. Policy strengths and weaknesses

4.1 Superiority of our policy against infectious diseases

4.1.1 Always put medical care in the first place in the prevention and control of infectious diseases

Joint prevention and control policy measures are adopted, combining disease control and rescue and scientific and technological research constitute a strong governance system for the prevention and control of infectious diseases[7]. Based on health care, public health policies cover multiple aspects and subjects from top to bottom. The policy of scientific and technological research and development is given top priority, and national efforts are made to develop vaccines for infectious diseases.

4.1.2 Always adhere to the rebound of internal prevention and the import of external prevention

At the beginning of infectious disease prevention and control, China mainly restricted the movement of people by controlling transport hubs, while tracking infectious disease patients or suspected patients through the linkage of transport and communication data, thus ensuring timely and effective prevention and control of the spread of infectious diseases in the mainland and ensuring the safety of the general public. This is due to the high level of infectious diseases in neighbouring countries and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, which puts great pressure on our country's "external prevention and importation".

4.2 Problems arising from policies for the prevention and control of infectious diseases

4.2.1 Policy absence in the early stage of infectious disease pneumonia

The early stages of the germination of infectious disease in China did not attract a high level of attention from local governments, and therefore no relevant policies were introduced at this stage to prevent the spread of infectious disease. The first area in China where the epidemic emerged was Huanan seafood market in Wuhan, Hubei Province, where 27 cases were publicly reported, but the government did not close the seafood market in time.

4.2.2 Local over-prevention of epidemics

In the context of the normalization of epidemics today, there is a proliferation of epidemics around the world, and excessive epidemic prevention has occurred in many regions. In order to ensure stability and security in their regions, as well as to maintain good performance of promotion, local governments have been increasing their policies and standards on top of the central policies on

infectious disease control^[8] to ensure "zero" infectious diseases in their own areas.

5.Recommendations

5.1 Establish and improve the public health event emergency system

Firstly, a public health emergency management system is needed as a support for the policy to ensure timely and effective prevention and control. Secondly, it is necessary to establish a monitoring, early warning and information sharing system. From top to bottom, all regions are linked^[9]. Data sharing through cloud platforms can break data barriers and information gaps, so that the central government and other regions can quickly respond and introduce new policies to prevent and control^[10], prompting rapid local responses and speeding up the construction of a multi-disease integrated surveillance network and symptom monitoring network with sentinel hospitals as the unit^[11].

5.2 Improve the accuracy of epidemic prevention policy formulation and implementation

To ensure the country's economic recovery and development as well as people's livelihood, the country needs to adjust its epidemic prevention policies and update its prevention standards according to the current situation. on 11 November 2022, the State Council responded to the prevention and control of the novel coronavirus infectious disease by issuing the Notice on Further Optimising the Prevention and Control Measures of the Infectious Disease Pneumonia Infectious Disease Scientific and Precise Protection Work^[12], announcing twenty measures to further optimise the prevention and control work. It eliminated sub-close contact tracing and medium-risk areas, among others, to further optimise the prevention and control of the population and the scope of prevention and control.

Conclusion

China's infectious disease prevention and control policy involves a number of subjects and fields, and various departments reacted quickly and issued policies to prevent the spread of infectious diseases in a short period of time. The remaining policies are scattered in various other areas. The central government has issued a series of illustrations and cartoons to facilitate local authorities' understanding and dissemination of infectious disease prevention and control policies, as well as the public's detailed knowledge of them. The degree of rigour and flexibility of epidemic prevention policies can affect the stability and economic functioning of a country.^[13]

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