

Decisive Actions which are Core Determinants in Responding to Covid-19 pandemic in Vietnam: An Example of a Low-Income Country.

Pham ThiBich Ngoc¹, RN & Van Dau Vu, RN, PhD

Covid-19 has been widespread worldwide. Although Vietnam shares the border with China where was known as the originated place of the Covid-19, the country still has kept low numbers of the virus cases. Currently only 270 confirmed cases with no death have been recorded in Vietnam (updated on April 27, 2020) (Ministry of Health, 2020). Among those 225 patients recovered while the rests (45 cases) are treated with stable health conditions. As views from Vietnamese nurses, Vietnam has managed the crisis efficiently using a series of swift actions.

Social distancing had been practiced when there were just a small number of cases confirmed with virus in Wuhan, China. Vietnamese citizens were called people to stay at home and celebrate the Lunar New Year's Eve with family members only. All national New Year events were cancelled. The national holiday had been extended until now, except essential works, such as food industry, pharmacy or governmental office work (Search Results Ministry of Labour - Invalids and Social Affairs, 2020). All schools have been closed, except some medical and nursing schools.

Massive tests have been taken. Testes have been taken to those who are suspected with the virus, who are closed contact to the infected people, and those in quarantines. Vietnam is one of few countries in the world that has successfully designed test-kit packages based on real-time PCR method (RT-PCR) with high sensitivity and specificity to the Covid-19 (Việt Nam News, 2020).

Quarantines have been taken in different models. First, quarantines in localities have been applied immediately in areas that have confirmed cases (Daily Mail, 2020). Secondly, all people from oversea or foreigners have been put in compulsory quarantine for 14 days in the governmental quarantine centres. After conducting the compulsory quarantine and having negative results of the virus test, they are required to continue to be self-isolated at home for another 14 days. With these actions, community transmission has been limited.

Early responses to the pandemic were the key to success. On 12th March, the first Covid-19 case was confirmed at Bach Mai hospital, Hanoi which is one of the largest hospitals in Vietnam. Immediately, the entire hospital was put in total lockdown and been disinfected thoroughly. Approximately 4,736 inpatients, 1,000 regular outpatients and 30,500 visiting patients, more than 1,500 healthcare workers, 7,000 family caregivers and 700 other employees working in the hospital for health examinations were listed and tested for the virus. Inpatients with negative test results were transferred back to provincial hospitals for continuous treatments in quarantined rooms. All outpatients, family caregivers and all others visiting the hospital within the last 14 days were tested and asked to self-isolate at home (Ministry of Health Portal, 2020). These swift actions may contribute to minimize the virus transmissions in hospitals and communities and clear the overcrowded situation of Bach Mai hospital. Therefore, it seems that the virus spread within hospitals and communities is put under control with only 44 confirmed cases recorded after 1 month.

Wearing masks is compulsory. Unlike Western countries, wearing a mask when leaving home is mandatory in Vietnam. The Vietnamese government put on fines of 100,000 to 300,000 VND for not wearing masks in public places (The Youth, 2020). This regulation was implemented starting on 16th March 2020.

Wearing masks, although is not an absolute method, could work to slow the spread of the virus because the virus can spread via droplets and micro droplets which get ejected up to six feet (Vanden Driessche et al., 2015). It can be said that Vietnam has succeed to fight Covid-19 pandemic in the first stage with no new cases confirmed with the virus for 11 days (Ministry of Health, 2020). However, it would not be the final result.

¹ Lecturer in Nam Dinh University of Nursing, Nam Dinh, Vietnam.

*Correspondence: Pham ThiBich Ngoc, RN.
Lecturer in Nam Dinh University of Nursing
Contact: Email: phamngoc.ndun@gmail.com

As public subjective psychology, many people thought that the disease ends. They went to the streets to celebrate 'the end of the disease' (VOV Vietnam, 2020). A number of risks of the virus spread are still considered. Like many countries, there has been five recovered cases in Vietnam found positive the second time (Ministry of Health, 2020). That would be complicated for Vietnam to control the disease if the social distancing measure is not under control.

Despite a shortage of resources, Vietnamese people have done quite well to fight against the Covid-19 pandemic by swift actions and well-preparedness. However, more research and measurements are needed to tackle the crisis entirely when people are back to work and study.

References

- Daily Mail. (2020). Four villages with a population of 10,000 are quarantined over coronavirus fears in Vietnam - the first mass isolation outside of China - after six cases are discovered. Retrieved from <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7998853/Vietnam-quarantines-area-10-000-residents-coronavirus.html>
- Ministry of Health. (2020). The Covid-19 pandemic updated. Retrieved from <https://ncov.moh.gov.vn/>
- Ministry of Health Portal. (2020). The outbreak at Bach Mai Hospital has basically been controlled. Retrieved from https://moh.gov.vn/tin-tong-hop/-/asset_publisher/k206Q9qkZOqn/content/o-dich-tai-bv-bach-mai-co-ban-a-uoc-kiem-soat
- Search Results Ministry of Labour - Invalids and Social Affairs. (2020). Guidelines for the prevention of nCovi diseases. Retrieved from <http://sv.cdktcnn.edu.vn/FileManager/Document/156%20TCGDNN-HSSV%20huong%20dan%20phong,%20chong%20benh%20nCoV.pdf>
- The Youth. (2020). Ho Chi Minh City fined people who did not wear masks. Retrieved from <https://tuoitre.vn/tp-hcm-da-phat-tien-nguoi-khong-deo-khau-trang-20200329145220784.htm>
- Vanden Driessche, K., Hens, N., Tilley, P., Quon, B. S., Chilvers, M. A., de Groot, R., . . . Zlosnik, J. E. A. (2015). Surgical masks reduce airborne spread of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* in colonized patients with cystic fibrosis. *American journal of respiratory and critical care medicine*, 192(7), 897. doi:10.1164/rccm.201503-0481LE
- Việt Nam News. (2020). VN ready for whatever COVID-19 brings: expert. Retrieved from <https://vietnamnews.vn/society/653390/vn-ready-for-whatever-covid-19-brings-expert.html>
- VOV Vietnam. (2020). Streets were crowded on the first day of easing social distancing in Hanoi.