Challenges in Data Collection for Research During and After the Pandemic

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Abstract

The scope of data collection pertaining to particular outbreaks as well as general pandemics needs to be addressed accurately. All stakeholders in the crisis management need to be provided with precise information fairly and attentively. The urgency for the crisis solution through strategic innovations and well-coordinated services necessitates data analysis to be done rigorously in timely manners. It is to be subsequently shared with all the relevant agencies with the goal of benefiting the overall society.

Accordingly, we need to develop coordination that are built upon competent human resources, comprehensive infrastructure, reasonable budget allocation, close cooperation of all agencies as well as highly patriotic policy makers. In our situation, even potential challenges to utilise the data had been pre-identified before the pandemic but the situation has been and will be more demanding during and after this pandemic era.

A focus group involving researchers from multi sectoral agencies during post-Omicron wave have recently revealed complex issues which had never been discussed openly. They include dismal response from the stakeholders as they could not grasp any immediate benefits of any study, wrong perception that the research is futile and time consuming, lack of cooperation from the ‘gate keepers’ of those who hold the authoritative section, poor data coordination on sharing between agencies i.e. MOH and MOHE on several issues, insufficient regulatory commitment on research policies, tendencies for unnecessary red tapes, and unhealthy rivalry between MOH and MOHE on overlapping research interests.

This pandemic experience has also reared the backward culture of standing pride based on institutional stratification. The competition to outnumber others by favouring certain research brands of certain institutions over others should be put aside. The determination to resolve the uncertainties of the epidemic in the future must be executed with full responsibility and mutual respects.

The end of these endemic transition era is still uncertain, but we can’t afford to wait much longer to put everything in perspective. While various technologies in data management continue to evolve, the turning point to achieve the ideal mark/goal of data availability is inevitably now.

Keywords
Challenges, Pandemic, Research data
References