



Letter to Editor / Editöre Mektup
Short Communication

Ensuring safety of guests and staffs in hotels from COVID-19 infection: World Health Organization

Otellerde misafirlerin ve personelin, COVID-19 enfeksiyonundan, güvenliğini sağlamak: Dünya Sağlık Örgütü

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ABSTRACT

The coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has significantly impacted the accommodation sector and hotel industries. As the process of relaxation of public health and social measures has begun in the different parts of the world, it is a mandatory requirement to strictly adhere to the standard protocol. The first and foremost requirement is to constitute a team, which together formulates an action plan and strategies to reduce the probability of acquisition or transmission of infection in hotel settings. This team should develop liaisons with the local public health authorities, tourism, catering, and other stakeholders. In conclusion, because hotels remain a potential ground for the acquisition and spread of infection, there is an immense need to strengthen infection prevention and control measures to ensure the safety of staff as well as guests.

Key words: COVID-19, Hotels, World Health Organization

ÖZET

Koronavirüs hastalığı-2019 (COVID-19) salgını, konaklama sektörünü ve otel endüstrilerini önemli ölçüde etkiledi. Halk sağlığının ve sosyal önlemlerin gevşetilmesi süreci dünyanın farklı yerlerinde başladığı için, standart protokole sıkı sıkıya bağlı kalmak zorunlu bir gerekliliktir. İlk ve en önemli gereklilik, otel ortamlarında enfeksiyon kapma veya bulaşma olasılığını azaltmak için birlikte bir eylem planı ve stratejiler oluşturan bir ekip oluşturmaktır. Bu ekip, yerel halk sağlığı yetkilileri, turizm, yiyecek-içecek hizmeti ve diğer paydaşlarla ilişkiler geliştirmelidir. Sonuç olarak, oteller enfeksiyonun edinilmesi ve yayılması için potansiyel bir zemin olmaya devam ettiğinden, personelin ve misafirlerin güvenliğini sağlamak için enfeksiyon önleme ve kontrol önlemlerini güçlendirmeye yönelik büyük bir ihtiyaç vardır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: COVID-19, Oteller, Dünya Sağlık Örgütü

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INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has significantly impacted the accommodation sector and hotel industries.¹ This has been primarily due to the detection of cases in 216 nations and territories, detection of 36361054 cases and 1056186 deaths among the infected individuals, as on 9 October 2020. Hotels have been identified as high-risk settings for the transmission of infection owing to the high probability of interaction (like lodging, contact with baggage, dining, cleaning, etc.) between guests and the staff.² As the process of relaxation of public health and social measures has begun in the different parts of the world, it is a mandatory requirement to strictly adhere to infection prevention and control measures.¹

Areas to be strengthened

The first and foremost requirement is to constitute a team, which together formulates an action plan and strategies to reduce the probability of acquisition or transmission of infection in hotel settings.³ This team should develop communication with the local public health authorities, tourism, catering and other stakeholders to develop the plan and also devise strategies to help the health authorities for ensuring effective management of patients, perform contact tracing and eventually reduce the impact of infection. Specific steps should be taken to ensure physical distancing and staffs should be instructed to practice regular hand hygiene, cleaning & disinfection of frequently touched surfaces, and the component of teleworking, screening of staff, & safe return to work post-exposure / recovery should also be explored.^{3,4}

Other domains

All these activities will require investment in logistics & equipment like personal protection kit, and to ensure that everything is being done, the overall supervision and maintenance of activities in the logbook should be maintained. In addition, a brochure or posters or video messages should be developed to inform the guests about the do's and don'ts and the steps which have been taken by the hotel for safeguarding the health and wellbeing of them.⁴ The reception staff have a crucial role to play and should monitor the number of guests in each room, inquire about the symptoms of the infection, maintain complete details which will be crucial for contact tracing and informing the health authorities about the suspect cases.^{1,3} It is quite obvious that none of these planned interventions can succeed without ensuring training of the staffs

and orienting them about the standard operating procedures which will ensure the safety of both staff as well as guests.³

From the maintenance and housekeeping perspective, adequate attention should be given towards water disinfection, dishwashing, laundry equipment, functionality of dispensers and maintaining proper indoor ventilation (through an opening of windows, disabling demand-control ventilation, etc.).^{3,4} Specific attention should be given towards maintaining hygiene in dining rooms or bars, wherein the positioning of tables and use of gloves by the staff can be monitored. Further, physical distancing and infection prevention & control measures should also be maintained in recreational places like gyms, swimming pools, or indoor play areas. Finally, a protocol should be developed for the staff or guests who were identified with the disease-related symptoms, including prompt isolation, seeking medical attention, and measures for the staff who are involved in the evacuation of the suspect individuals.^{1,3,4}

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, because hotels remain a potential ground for the acquisition and spread of infection, there is an immense need to strengthen infection prevention and control measures to ensure safety of staff as well as guests.

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