

## COMPETENCES NECESSARY FOR JAPANESE PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER DIRECTORS IN RESPONDING TO PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES

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**Objective** To clarify the “competencies” required of public health center directors in “public health emergency responses.”

**Methods** We selected as our subjects six major public health emergencies in Japan that accorded with a definition of a “health crisis.” Their types were: (1) natural disaster; (2) exposure to toxic substances caused by individuals; (3) food poisoning; and (4) accidental hospital infection. Item analysis was conducted using the Incident Analysis Method, based on the “Medical SAFER Technique.”

**Results** The competencies of public health center directors required the following actions: ① to estimate the impact on local health from the “first notification” of the occurrence and the “initial investigation”; ② to manage a thorough investigation of causes; ③ to manage organizations undertaking countermeasures; ④ to promptly provide precise information on countermeasures, etc.; and ⑤ to create systems enabling effective application of countermeasures against recurrence of incidents, and to achieve social consensus.

**Conclusion** For public health preparedness, public health center directors should have the following competencies: ① the ability to estimate the “impact” of public health emergencies that have occurred or may occur; ② be able to establish and carry out proactive policies; ③ be persuasive; and ④ have organizational management skills.

**Key words** : public health center directors, local health administrations, competence, public health emergency responses, emergency preparedness

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