

AB007. Health-DRR nexus: where is the rub?—a case study on the Philippines' response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic

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Background: This paper reviews the theoretical, legal, and operational links between health emergency management and disaster risk reduction (DRR) in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. While the Sendai Framework for DRR recognizes epidemics and pandemics as among the biological hazards that should be addressed in DRR, there seems to be a disconnect in the way the world, and national governments treated DRR of the SFDRR and the Health Emergency Disaster Risk Management (Health-EDRM) framework adopted by the WHO in 2019. An initial study on the topic notes the “silo” between the two when it stated that “there is no mention of disaster at all within the WHO COVID-19 technical guidance” and “it is not clear whether COVID-19 is leading to collaboration between the WHO and the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction”. At the country level, it has been noted that countries took dramatically different implementation approaches in managing the pandemic.

Methods: This paper examines the theoretical, legal, and inter-operational relationships between DRR and Health-EDRM at the national and local levels as the Philippine government responds to the threats of COVID-19. The case at the national level and three case studies at the local level are analysed through key informants' interview and document analysis.

Results: The study found out that the COVID-19

pandemic management in the Philippines, whether at the national or local level, has been led mostly by the health sector. However, the DRR sector closely collaborates with it on a case-to-case basis because different local governments have different levels of pandemic management capabilities.

Conclusions: There are still lingering questions whether the DRR sector should just focus on responding to disasters caused by natural hazards and/or still be at the forefront of pandemic management. If in the case of the latter, the follow-up question is—could and should its roles/tasks be standardized nationwide?

Keywords: Public health emergency; disaster risk reduction; coronavirus disease pandemic (COVID-19 pandemic)

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Footnote

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Ethical Statement: The author is accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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