



코로나바이러스감염증-19 유행 이후 수도권역 내 지자체 감염병 대응 역량 조사 연구

손준석¹ , 박재현² , 박종호³ , 김성남¹ , 황경원^{1*}

¹질병관리청 수도권질병대응센터 감염병대응과, ²성균관대학교 의과대학 사회의학교실, ³대구대학교 보건의료학과

초 록

목적: 본 조사는 수도권역 내 지방자치단체(지자체)의 감염병 대응 인력 및 조직 현황을 조사하여 감염병 예방과 관리 방안 마련과 대응 역량 강화를 위한 기초자료로 활용하고자 수행되었다. 연구보고서 중 코로나바이러스감염증-19 유행 이후 행정적, 물리적 여건이 다른 수도권역 내 기초지자체(시·군·구 단위) 감염병 대응 역량 조사 결과를 보고하고자 한다.

방법: 세부 42개 지표를 사용하여 감염병 대응 역량을 조사하였으며, 시·군·구 감염병 대응부서 소속의 전체 감염병 대응 인력을 대상으로 설문을 수행하였다.

결과: 수도권역 내 기초지자체의 감염병 관리는 50% 이상에서 '과' 하위 단위인 '팀' 구조로 운영되고 있으며, 감염병 대응부서 인력 중 50% 이상이 정규직 또는 전담 인력으로 구성되어 있었다. 또한, 시·군·구 감염 환자 이송 협의체 구성 관련 사항, 감염병 대응 인력 중 전문직 공무원 대응 인력과 의사 대응 인력 부분에서 권역 내 기초지자체 간 격차가 큰 지표로 확인됐다.

결론: 향후 기초지자체 감염병 대응 역량 유지·관리를 위해 지자체 감염병 팀장의 역할이 클 것으로 예상된다. 또한 권역 간, 권역 내 기초지자체 간, 큰 변동계수를 가지는 지표에 대해 격차를 줄이기 위한 정책 추진이 필요하다. 이를 위해 감염병 대응 역량에 대한 지속적 조사·연구가 필요하며 본 자료를 정책 마련을 위한 기초자료로 활용할 수 있을 것이다.

주요 검색어: 코로나바이러스감염증-19; 감염병 대응 역량; 수도권역 기초지자체

서 론

2000년 이후 코로나바이러스감염증-19(코로나19) 유행, 중동호흡기증후군, 조류인플루엔자 인체감염증 등 신종 및 재출현 감염병이 지속적으로 발생함에 따라 감염병 대비와 대응

의 중요성이 크게 주목받았다. 이에 따라 감염병 발생 위험 요인에 대한 조사·분석·평가 체계와 감염병 확산 방지를 위한 대비·대응책 등이 마련되었다[1-9]. 현재는 구축된 감염병 관리 역량을 체계적으로 유지·개선할 수 있는 방안이 논의되어야 할 시점이다.

Received November 18, 2025 Revised December 11, 2025 Accepted December 26, 2025

*Corresponding author: 황경원, Tel: +82-2-361-5720, E-mail: kirk99@korea.kr

Copyright © Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency



This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>) which permits unrestricted distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.



KDCA
Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency

핵심요약

① 이전에 알려진 내용은?

코로나바이러스감염증-19(코로나19) 유행 전후 감염병 발생 현황과 광역지자체(시·도) 감염병 대응 인력 현황 조사가 이루어졌다.

② 새로이 알게 된 내용은?

코로나19 유행 이후 수도권역 내 기초지자체(시·군·구) 내 감염병 대응 역량 세부 현황을 파악하였다. 수도권역 내 시·군·구 단위 기초지자체의 감염병 관리는 50% 이상에서 '과' 하위 단위 '팀' 구조로 운영되고 있으며, 감염병 대응 부서 인력 중 50% 이상이 정규직 또는 전담 인력으로 구성되어 있었다.

③ 시사점은?

수도권역 내 시·군·구 단위 감염병 대응은 부서장(과장) 중심보다는 팀장 중심으로 이루어지고 있으며, 감염병 팀 내 정규직 또는 전담 인력은 보건소 내 정규직 인력 구성보다 많아 코로나19 유행 후 각 기초지자체의 감염병 대응 능력 관리·개선을 위한 노력이 있었음을 알 수 있었다.

감염병 관리는 발생 이전 예방, 발생 후 전파 차단, 확산 시 대응으로 구분할 수 있으며, 단계별로 서로 다른 취약 요인 분석과 대응 전략이 필요하다. 감염병 발생에 대한 예방 및 대비 태세를 사전에 구축하고 감염병 재난 발생 시 신속한 대응으로 위기 상황을 조기 종식하기 위해서는 단계별 체계적 접근이 필요하다. 이에 분야별 감염병 대비·대응을 위한 사항을 마련하기 위해 다양한 연구가 수행되었다. 그 중 감염병 발생 및 확산에 영향을 주는 요소, 지표에 관한 연구가 코로나19 유행 과정 중 수행되었다. 코로나19 유행 상황에서 사회·경제적 측면의 거시적 지표가 제시된 바 있으며[1,2], 또 다른 연구에서는 코로나19 유행이라는 특수한 상황에서 지자체 감염병 대응 인력 현황 등 관련 사항이 조사되었다. 주요 내용은 감염병 대응 조직, 법정 감염병 대응 인력, 법정 감염병 인력 현황에 대한 사안 등이 포함되었다[3]. 또한, 감염병 발생 및 발생 이후 초기대응을 위한 기본적인 감염병 관리 요건이 필

요하다. 코로나19 유행을 경험하며 감염병 대비·대응을 위한 기본 요건이 구축되었으며 지속적으로 개선하고 있다. 그 중 법적 근거 마련을 위한 법령의 개정, 감염병 발생의 실시간 감시·조사·분석을 위한 감염병 발생 정보체계 구축, 대응 인력 마련을 위한 역학조사관 제도 도입, 역량 강화 훈련 프로그램 개발 및 대응체계 마련, 지자체와 중앙의 협력을 위한 거버넌스 강화, 감염병 발생 차단 및 확산 방지책인 치료제/백신 개발 및 수급에 대한 사항 등 여러 분야에서 그 노력은 지속되고 있다.

이에 수도권질병대응센터에서는 감염병 발생을 대비하여 권역 내 감염병 대응 수준과 대응 역량에 대한 지속적인 관리 방안 및 개선 사항 발굴을 위해 「수도권 감염병 위험 프로파일링을 통한 권역 맞춤형 대응 전략 마련」 연구를 수행하였다[4]. 본 연구에서는 수도권역(서울, 인천, 경기, 강원)의 감염병 취약성과 각 시·도, 시·군·구별 감염병 발생 및 대응 취약성을 평가하였으며 감염병 대응 자원·대응 역량의 격차를 분석하였다. 이를 바탕으로 맞춤형 예방 및 대응 전략을 개발하여 정책 마련 근거로 활용하고자 하였다. 본 보고에서는 코로나19 유행 이후 수도권역 내 각 기초지자체의 감염병 대응 역량에 대한 조사 결과를 보고하고자 한다. 아울러 본 보고는 「수도권 감염병 위험 프로파일링을 통한 권역 맞춤형 대응 전략 마련」 최종결과보고서[4]를 토대로 작성되었음을 밝힌다.

방 법

1. 조사 개요 및 내용

수도권역 감염병 대응 역량 평가를 위해 코로나19 유행 등 감염병 재난 시 활용된 전파 대응 역량 및 의료 대응 역량 지표를 설문조사 항목으로 활용하였다. 감염병 대응 역량은 대응 인력의 수와 역량, 발생 구역 내 타 기관과의 협력체계, 그리고 방역물품을 포함한 대응자원 확보 등에 의해 평가된다. 이를 기반으로 전문가 자문 조사(focus group interviews)

를 통해 평가지표를 개발하였으며, 각 지표에 대한 조작적 정의를 내렸다. 이를 바탕으로 10개 범주(감염병 대응 인력, 역학조사관, 교육, 협의체, 계획 수립, 방역물품, 이주민 관리 등), 42개 세부 지표 항목 결정 후, 구조화된 엑셀 양식 조사표(보충 자료; available online)로 설문이 진행됐다.

1) 조작적 정의

(1) 감염병 대응 인력

감염병 대응 인력(명)이란 시·군·구 및 보건소(보건지소, 보건진료소 포함)에서 실제 근무 중인 정규직과 비정규직 인력 모두를 포함하였다. 정규직은 공무원(일반 임기제 및 전문 임기제 포함)을 의미하며, 비정규직은 시간선택 임기제 공무원, 한시 임기제 공무원, 공무직/기간제/공공근로/단기기간제 근로자, 공중보건의사를 의미한다. 또한, 보건기관 인력이란 보건소/보건지소/보건진료소 소장, 의사, 치과의사, 한의사, 약사, 간호사, 영양사, 보건 교육사, 의료기사, 간호조무사, 행정직, 보건직, 기능직 등의 인력을 포함했다. 감염병 대응부서는 감염병대응센터, 감염병대응과, 감염병 대응팀을 총칭하는 포괄적 의미로 사용되었으며 감염병 대응 업무란 법정 감염병 관리 및 감염병 위기에 대한 대비·대응 업무를 모두 포함했다. 때때로 감염병 외 타 업무를 하는 경우, 감염병 업무를 전담하는 인력에서 제외하였다. 2년 이상 근무 기준은 근무 부서가 바뀌었던 경우 현재 및 이전 감염병 대응 업무를 했던 기간을 모두 합하여 계산하였으며 의사, 치과의사, 한의사를 모두 포함하였다.

(2) 역학조사관

역학조사관이란 역학조사관의 직위를 받은 수료 및 수습 역학조사관 모두를 의미한다. 또한, 정규직과 비정규직 범주는 위 언급된 감염병 대응 인력에서 언급된 것과 동일하게 적용되었다. 역학조사관 간 멘토링이란 수료 역학조사관이 수습 역학조사관 또는 경험이 많은 선배 역학조사관이 서로 1:1로

매칭되어 수료 또는 선배 역학조사관이 수습 및 후배 역학조사관의 업무 및 역량을 관리하고 주기적이고 반복적으로 역학조사 업무 중에 교육, 멘토링, 자문, 컨설팅 등을 통해 역학조사관의 역량 강화 기회를 제공하는지 여부 유/무를 조사하였다. 특히, 수습·수료 역학조사관 또는 선배·후배 역학조사관이 함께 현장을 평가하고, 데이터 분석 등 실무 훈련을 함께 수행함으로써 역량을 강화하는지를 설문하였다. 역학조사관 감염병 대응 인력 멘토링이란 감염병 대응부서 소속의 역학조사관 중 최소 1인 이상이 감염병 대응부서 소속 인력에 대해 필요시 교육, 자문, 멘토링, 컨설팅 등 감염병 대응에 필요한 지식과 기술을 습득할 수 있도록 지원함을 의미한다. 특히, 역학조사관이 타 감염병 대응 인력보다 특정 영역에 대한 전문성과 경험이 있어 해당 분야에 대해 타 인력이 도움을 요청할 때 적절히 개입하거나 도움을 줄 수 있는지 여부를 중점적으로 조사하였다. 역학조사관의 통계 분석/학술 지원은 역학조사관의 통계 분석, 보고서 작성, 학술 활동 등에 필요한 통계 프로그램 구입/구독 및 학술연구비 지원(영문교정료, 논문게재료 등)을 자체 예산으로 지원해 주고 있는지를 의미한다. 특히, 현재까지 지원한 적이 없더라도 예산상 해당 항목이 반영되어 있으면 '유'로 표기하도록 하였다.

(3) 교육 및 협의체 등 관련

교육 설문에서 사용된 이수란 질병관리청에서 주관하는 각 지위 직급에 지정된 과정 수료를 의미한다. 감염병 대응부서 소속 감염병 대응 인력의 감염취약시설 교육 시행 횟수란 최근 1년간 감염병 전파에 취약한 요양원, 요양병원, 정신건강증진시설, 장애인 시설 등의 감염병 관리 인력에게 감염병 대응 관련한 교육을 시행한 건수를 의미한다. 질병정보 모니터링 요원 등록 및 연 1회 이상 교육이란 병·의원, 학교, 산업체, 급식소, 사회복지시설, 유치원, 어린이집 등 감염위험시설에 대한 질병정보 모니터링 요원을 등록하고 최근 1년에 1회 이상 감염병 예방 관리 요령 홍보, 감염병 환자 진단 시 발

표 1. 2024년 수도권 시·군·구 단위 감염병 대응 역량 현황(감염병 대응 인력)

구분	지표명	상대평가 지표										절대평가 지표				
		평균					변동계수					요구 수준				
		전체	서울	인천	경기	강원	전체	서울	인천	경기	강원	전체	서울	인천	경기	강원
시·군·구	보건소 인력 ^{a)}	11.5	7.0	18.5	6.2	26.1	1.28	0.50	1.66	1.01	0.51	-	-	-	-	-
전체 감염병 대응 인력	보건소 소속 인력 중 정규직 공무원 비율(%)	57.3	65.9	59.3	53.2	54.1	0.21	0.28	0.18	0.18	0.19	-	-	-	-	-
	보건소 감염병대응센터 또는 감염병대응과 구성 여부(유/무)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	구성 유	41	48	30	17
시·군·구	보건소 전체 인력 중 감염병 대응센터 또는 감염병대응과 인력 비율(%)	8.6	9.4	2.9	9.9	7.9	1.40	1.19	2.00	1.31	1.61	-	-	-	-	-
	보건소 감염병대응센터 또는 감염병대응과 인력 중 정규직 공무원 비율(%)	30.7	38.4	24.6	26.9	32.3	1.14	0.98	1.55	1.13	1.17	-	-	-	-	-
	보건소 전체 인력 중 감염병 대응부서(센터, 과, 팀) 내 인력 비율(%)	11.4	7.8	10.1	14.4	9.9	0.58	0.48	0.65	0.52	0.37	-	-	-	-	-
	보건소 감염병 대응부서(센터, 과, 팀) 중 정규직 공무원 비율(%)	66.8	68.7	81.7	60.9	69.6	0.33	0.39	0.23	0.32	0.23	-	-	-	-	-
시·군·구	소속 감염병 대응부서(센터, 과, 팀) 중 감염병 전담 인력 비율(%)	62.0	69.5	53.2	63.8	52.4	0.50	0.48	0.54	0.45	0.59	-	-	-	-	-
시·군·구	소속 감염병 대응부서(센터, 과, 팀) 인력 중 임기제 공무원 또는 전문직 공무원 감염병 대응 인력 비율(%)	10.8	15.2	4.9	9.2	11.6	1.76	1.55	2.15	1.71	1.63	-	-	-	-	-
	시·군·구 소속 감염병 대응부서(센터, 과, 팀) 인력 중 임기제 공무원 또는 전문직 공무원 감염병 대응 인력 비율(%)	9.7	16.2	9.4	10.0	0.4	1.24	0.78	1.18	1.18	4.12	-	-	-	-	-

표 2. 2024년 수도권 시·군·구 단위 감염병 대응 역량 현황(인력 부분 중 역학조사관 관련)

구분	지표명	상대평가 지표										절대평가 지표									
		평균					변동계수					요구 수준				종속 비율(%)					
		전체	서울	인천	경기	강원	전체	서울	인천	경기	강원	전체	서울	인천	경기	강원	전체	서울	인천	경기	강원
시·군·구 역학조사관 인력	보건소 소속 감염병 대응부서 (센터, 과, 팀) 전체(수습+수료) 역학조사관 ^{a)}	0.11	0.06	0.03	0.07	0.32	0.87	0.78	0.90	1.04	0.77	구성유 (1명 이상)	89	100	70	37	89				
	보건소 소속 감염병 대응부서 (센터, 과, 팀) 일반과정 수료한 역학조사관 ^{a)}	0.04	0.03	0.02	0.04	0.04	1.21	0.77	0.99	1.02	2.08	구성유 (1명 이상)	64	80	60	71	28				
	시·군·구 소속 감염병 대응부서 (센터, 과, 팀) 역학조사관 중 정규직 공무원 비율(%)	58.8	61.3	50.0	54.9	69.4	0.77	0.73	0.89	0.83	0.64	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	시·군·구 소속 감염병 대응부서 (센터, 과, 팀) 역학조사관 중 전담 역학조사관 비율(%)	51.6	70.0	38.3	58.9	16.7	1.14	0.71	1.13	0.72	2.00	구성유 (1명 이상)	62	76	50	74	22				
	시·군·구 소속 감염병 대응부서 (센터, 과, 팀) 역학조사관 중 2년 이상 근무한 역학조사관 비율(%)	55.8	80.7	41.7	57.1	25.9	0.85	0.35	1.06	0.77	1.20	구성유 (1명 이상)	69	96	50	69	44				
	역학조사관 간 펜토링(유/무)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	펜토링 유	20	24	10	29	0				
	역학조사관 감염병 대응 인력 펜토링(유/무)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	펜토링 유	33	40	40	38	6				
	역학조사관 통계 분석/학술 지원 (유/무)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	지원 유	8	16	0	10	0				

^{a)}(기초지자체 보건기관 인력 수[명]×10,000)/기초지자체 주민등록인구 수(명). Reused from the report of Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (2024) [4].

표 3. 2024년 수도권 시·군·구 단위 감염병 대응 역량 현황(교육, 협의체 등 관련)

구분	지표명	상대평가 지표										절대평가 지표											
		평균					변동계수					요구 수준											
		전체	서울	인천	경기	강원	전체	서울	인천	경기	강원	전체	서울	인천	경기	강원							
시·군·구 감염병 대응 인력 교육	보건소장[방역관 및 감염병 관리자 교육과정] 이수 여부(유/무)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	이수유	25	28	20	29	17	
	보건소 감염병 관련 5급 이상 센터장/소장/부장/과장 등 대상[방역관 및 감염병 관리자 교육과정] 이수율(%)	13.8	10.0	5.0	19.2	11.1	2.21	2.83	3.00	1.71	2.83	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	보건소 감염병 관련 팀장 FETP 교육 이수율(%)	37.3	40.0	32.5	31.6	49.5	0.94	1.00	0.89	0.93	0.81	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	보건소 감염병 대응부서 소속 감염병 대응 인력 FETP 교육 이수율(%)	14.0	15.9	16.6	8.7	22.4	1.22	1.38	0.69	1.07	0.97	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	진체 보건소 인력 중 예비 방역 인력 양성 교육 이수율(%)	4.0	3.5	7.3	2.1	7.1	0.86	0.55	0.34	1.02	0.59	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	외부 감염병 관리 담당자 교육	12.9	15.1	3.1	18.8	1.5	1.26	1.50	0.77	1.59	1.16	1.16	1.50	0.77	1.59	1.16	시행유 (1건 이상)	83	88	90	86	67	
	감염병 대응 지자체-의료 협의체 구성 여부(유/무)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	구성유	71	48	100	71	83
	시·군·구 감염병 대응 지자체-의료 협의체 구성 여부(유/무)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	구성유 (1개 이상)	71	48	100	71	83
	유형(기본/전문가-자문/응급의료대응/통합형-유/무)	1.6	1.1	1.5	1.8	1.9	1.36	1.99	1.09	1.41	0.96	1.16	1.50	0.77	1.59	1.16	회의를 (1건 이상)	55	32	70	57	72	
	시·군·구 감염병 대응 지자체-의료 협의체 회의 횟수(건)	1.6	1.1	1.5	1.8	1.9	1.36	1.99	1.09	1.41	0.96	1.16	1.50	0.77	1.59	1.16	회의를 (1건 이상)	55	32	70	57	72	

산 편성이 없음을 확인했다.

3. 교육 및 협의체 등 관련

권역 내 시·군·구 감염병 대응 인력 교육 지표 중, 보건소 감염병 관련 팀장 field epidemiology training program (FETP) 교육 이수율(%)을 제외하면 전반적으로 낮은 이수율을 보였다(표 3) [4]. 보건소 감염병 관련 팀장 FETP 교육 이수율(%)이 다른 교육 이수율(%)보다 높게(권역 평균 37.3%) 나타났다. 반면, 보건소장, 보건소 감염병 관련 5급 이상 센터장/소장/부장/과장 등 대상, 보건소 감염병 대응부서 소속 감염병 대응 인력(FETP) 대상 및 전체 보건소 인력 중 예비 방역 인력 대상 이수율(%) 지표에서는 각각 13.5%, 14.0%, 4.0%로 낮은 수준으로 조사됐다.

권역 내 시·군·구 감염병 대응 협의체 구성 및 운영 부분에 있어 지자체-의료협의체 구성에서는 인천(100%), 감염취약시설 대응 협의체 구성에서 서울은 44%, 감염 환자 이송 협의체 구성에서는 경기도가 12%로, 상대적으로 높은 충족률을 보였다. 인천에선 감염병 위기관리 대책 수립 및 활동 지표에서 위에서 언급된 6가지 충족 요건을 모두 만족했다. 방역물품 관리 및 사용 지표 중 수량 및 유효기간 확인/관리지표는 유일하게 모든 권역에서 100% 충족률을 보였다. 다만, 보관지표에서 지침에 따른 적정한 보관 장소 및 온습도 유지 부분에서 보완할 점이 확인되었다. 이주민 감염관리 지표 중 이주민 소통채널 확보에서 인천이 20%의 충족률을 보였으며, 활용되는 외국어 안내문 언어(수) 지표에선 서울에서 가장 낮은 언어 수(0.2개)로 조사됐다.

논 의

이번 정책연구용역에서 수도권역 내 기초지자체별 감염병 대응 역량을 조사하였다. 수도권역 내 감염병 관련 조직은 시·도와 시·군·구 간 차이가 있었다. 시·도 광역 단위, 감

염병 관련 조직 운영은 보건·복지·건강 '국' 산하 '과' 수준에서 운용되고 있었으나, 시·군·구 단위 지자체에선 보건소를 기반으로 '과' 및 '팀' 단위로 감염병 예방, 대응 및 관리가 이루어지고 있었다. 강원 지자체 경우, 보건소 감염병 대응 '센터' 또는 감염병 대응 '과' 구성 충족 비율이 7%임을 확인하였다. 감염병 대응 인력 측면에선, 지자체 감염병 대응 인력은 50% 이상이 정규직 또는 전담 인력(역학조사관 포함)으로 구성되어 있었다. 시·군·구(보건소)의 임기제 공무원 또는 전문직 공무원(역학조사관) 대응 인력이 적다 하더라도 시·도(광역) 단위 수준에서 이를 보완하며 운영하는 부분도 있어, 정책연구용역 결과를 전반적으로 확인하여 결과를 해석해야 한다. 이는 조직 개편과 함께 대응 역량의 질적 강화가 이루어졌음을 유추할 수 있었다. 다만, 본 논문에서 시·도 광역 조사 결과는 별도로 기술하지 않았으며, 시·군·구/보건소 단위 감염병 대응 역량에 대한 부분에 한정하여 기술하였다.

정책연구용역에서 현장 상황과 기존의 자료를 바탕으로 다양한 감염병 대응 역량 지표를 개발하였다. 개발된 지표를 바탕으로 감염병 대응의 최전선인 시·도 및 시·군·구 감염병 관련 대응 지표 현황을 조사하여 각 지자체의 강점과 약점을 제시하였다. 다만, 각 지표 간, 권역 간 차이뿐 아니라, 각 권역 내 시·군·구 간 큰 표준편차가 확인되어 대응 역량 결과를 기반으로 어떤 결론을 일반화하기 쉽지 않았다. 다만, 이는 권역 내 또는 시·군·구 내, 물리적 거리, 인구의 공간적 배치 차이(밀집도 등), 각 시·군·구의 행정력, 행정운영 방식 등 차이가 반영되어 나타난 결과로 생각된다. 또한, 보건소 내 감염병 대응부서는 감염병대응센터, 감염병 대응과, 감염병 대응팀을 포함하는데, 대부분 '팀' 단위 구조로 편제되어 있어 자료 해석에 주의가 필요해 보인다. 그뿐만 아니라, 감염병 관련 업무의 분류 및 범주의 다양성과 복잡성으로 '감염병 대응부서' 및 '감염병 대응 인력'이란 조사 결과 해석에도 주의가 필요하다[3].

지면의 한계로 정책연구용역의 내용 중 매우 한정된 결과

만을 기술하였으나, 그럼에도 이번 정책연구용역은 코로나19 유행 이후 수도권역 내 감염병 대응 관련 지표를 발굴하여 체계적인 조사 결과를 제시하였다는 점에서 의미가 있다고 생각된다. 자료의 산출, 통계 처리 방식, 표기의 통일성 등 부족한 점이 여러 부분에 존재하나, 지역 공중보건 체계 강화를 위한 기초자료로 활용할 수 있을 것이다. 또한, 향후 새로운 감염병 유행에 대비하여 관리 및 지속 가능성을 고려한 위기 대응 지표 개발 연구 및 조사가 지속되길 기대해 본다.

Declarations

Ethics Statement: Not application.

Funding Source: This research is supported Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (1790387-202400087).

Acknowledgments: This paper is a reconfiguration of the Study on Development infectious disease coping strategy of capital area through hazard profiling by Policy Research Services. We thank the members of the Division of Infectious Disease Control and Response, Capital Regional Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency, Seoul, Korea; Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, Sungkyunkwan University School of Medicine, Jae-Min Kim; Department of Preventive Medicine, University of Ulsan College of Medicine, Ulsan University, Eunjeong Noh; Department of Health Administration, Inje University, Su-Yeun Seo; Department of Interdisciplinary Program in Biomedical Engineering, Pusan National University, Myung-Jae Lee.

Conflict of Interest: The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization: Jae-Hyun Park. Data curation: Jae-Hyun Park, Jong-Ho Park. Formal

analysis: Jae-Hyun Park, Jong-Ho Park. Funding acquisition: Jae-Hyun Park. Investigation: Jae-Hyun Park, Jong-Ho Park. Methodology: Jae-Hyun Park, Jong-Ho Park. Project administration: Jae-Hyun Park. Software: Jae-Hyun Park, Jong-Ho Park. Supervision: Jae-Hyun Park. Validation: Jae-Hyun Park, Jong-Ho Park. Writing – original draft: JSS, SNK, KWH. Writing – review & editing: JSS, Jae-Hyun Park, SNK, KWH.

Supplementary Materials

Supplementary data are available online.

References

1. Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency Press Release (November 28 2022). Establishing and Utilizing Socioeconomic Indicators for Infectious Disease Crisis Response. [cited 2022 Dec 28]. Available from: <https://www.kdca.go.kr/kdca/2847/subview.do?enc=Zm5jdDF8QEB8JTJGYmJzJTJGa2RjYSUyRjQxJ-TJGMjE0MDgzJTJGYXJ0Y2xWaWV3LmRvJTNGcG-Fzc3dvcMQlM0QlMjZyZ3NCZ25kZVN0ciUzRCUyNmZpbmRPeG53cmQlM0QlMjZmaW5kV29yZCUzR-CVFQyU5QyU4NCVFQSVCOVCVCMCVFQIU4QyU4M-CVFQyU5RCU5MSUyNnJnc0VuZGRlU3RyJTNE-JTl2ZmluZFR5cGUlM0RzaiUyNmZpbmRDbFNlcSUzR-CUyNnBhZ2UIM0QyJTl2>
2. Kim TH, Chung W, Lee Y, Park J, Chio E. Development of socioeconomic indicators to respond to infectious disease crisis. Cheongju: Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA); 2024 Mar. Report No.: 11-1790387-000998-01.
3. Chae S, Yun GJ, Jun J, et al. State of local infectious disease response personnel before and after the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic. Public Health Wkly Rep 2025;18:1-16.
4. Pak JH, Noh EJ, Seo SY, Kim JM, Lee MJ. Development infectious disease coping strategy of capital area through

- hazard profiling. Cheongju: Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA); 2024 Dec. Report No.: 11-1790387-001171-01.
5. Bae MK, Oh H. A study on the evaluation of vulnerabilities for the establishments of infectious disease response policy in local governments. *J Korean Reg Dev Assoc* 2021;33:23-44.
 6. Hwang H, Han SH. A regional approach to reducing vulnerability to emerging infectious diseases: vulnerability assessment and smart response policies. Seoul: Korea Institute of Public Administration (KIPA); 2021 Dec. Report No.: 2021-09.
 7. Pak JH. Development of infectious disease regional vulnerability and disaster management capacity assessment tool. Policy Research Service; 2023.
 8. Seo KM. A study on the vulnerability assessment method of local governments in the prevention stage in the case of an infectious disease disaster. *Proc Korean Soc Disaster Inf Conf 2022*;2022:150-1.
 9. Bae MK, Oh H. Relative weight evaluation for the vulnerability indicators of infectious disease using analytic hierarchy process in local governments. *J Korea Contents Assoc* 2021;21:704-13.

Original Article

Study of Infectious Disease Response Capabilities of Metropolitan Area Local Governments Following the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Pandemic

Junseock Son¹ , Jae-Hyun Park² , Jong-Ho Park³ , Sunnam Kim¹ , Kyungwon Hwang^{1*} 

¹Division of Infectious Disease Control and Response, Capital Regional Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency, Seoul, Korea, ²Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, Sungkyunkwan University School of Medicine, Suwon, Korea, ³Department of Health and Medical Information, Daegu University, Gyeongsan, Korea

ABSTRACT

Objectives: This study was conducted to investigate the current status of infectious disease response personnel and organizations in local governments within the Seoul metropolitan area (Seoul, Gyeonggi, Incheon, and Gangwon). This survey was designed to foster development of infectious disease prevention and management plans and to strengthen response capabilities. Herein, we present the results of a survey on infectious disease response capabilities at local government levels including city, county, and district levels within the metropolitan area, that are facing unique administrative and physical challenges following the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic.

Methods: We conducted a survey using 42 detailed indicators and targeting infectious disease response personnel belonging to infectious disease response units in city, county, and district governments to investigate their infectious disease response capacities.

Results: Infectious disease management in local governments within the metropolitan area operates under a “team” structure, subordinate to “department” in over 50% of cases. More than 50% of the infectious disease response department staff were either full-time or dedicated. Significant differences were identified between the local governments within the region regarding the composition of city, county, and district infectious disease patient transfer councils and the proportions of professional civil servants and physicians responding to infectious diseases.

Conclusions: Local government infectious disease team leaders are expected to play significant roles in maintaining and managing infectious disease response capabilities. Furthermore, policies are required to reduce the differences between regions, local governments within a region, and indicators with high coefficients of variation. Ongoing investigations into infectious disease response capabilities are necessary. The data reported herein can serve as a foundation for policy development.

Key words: COVID-19; Infectious disease response capacity; Basic local governments in the metropolitan area

*Corresponding author: Kyungwon Hwang, Tel: +82-2-361-5720, E-mail: kirk99@korea.kr

Key messages

① What is known previously?

We conducted a survey to investigate the status of infectious disease outbreaks and infectious disease response personnel in metropolitan and provincial governments before and after the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

② What new information is presented?

We analyzed the detailed status of infectious disease response capabilities within city, county, and district governments in the Seoul metropolitan area following the COVID-19 pandemic. Infectious disease management within these local governments was structured as “teams” within “departments” in over 50% of cases, with over 50% of infectious disease response departments comprised of full-time or dedicated personnel.

③ What are the implications?

In the metropolitan area, responses to infectious diseases at city, county, and district levels is centered around team leaders rather than department heads (section heads), and the number of full-time or dedicated personnel within infectious disease teams is higher than the number of full-time personnel in public health centers, indicating that efforts have been made to improve infectious disease response capabilities in each local government since the COVID-19 pandemic.

outbreaks, as well as for designing preparedness and response measures to prevent disease spread, have been developed [1-9]. It is now imperative to engage in sustained, systematic discourse on strategies for maintaining and strengthening existing infectious disease management capacities.

Infectious disease control may be broadly categorized into three phases: prevention prior to an outbreak, mitigation of transmission following an outbreak, and response during active spread. Each phase entails distinct vulnerabilities and requires tailored countermeasures. A systematic, phased approach is therefore essential to establish preventive and preparedness measures in advance and to enable rapid and effective response to infectious disease emergencies, thereby facilitating early resolution of crisis situations. Accordingly, numerous studies have examined preparedness and response strategies to infectious diseases across specific fields. During the COVID-19 pandemic in particular, research has focused on identifying factors and indicators influencing the emergence and subsequent spread of infectious diseases. Several studies have presented macroeconomic indicators that reflect the socioeconomic dimensions of the pandemic [1,2]. Other investigations have examined the status of local government personnel responsible for infectious disease response under the exceptional conditions of the COVID-19 crisis, with particular emphasis on the following: infectious disease response teams, personnel assigned to nationally notifiable infectious diseases, and workforce capacity for managing such diseases [3]. Moreover, foundational requirements for infectious disease management are essential for mounting effective initial responses during and after outbreaks. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought renewed attention to the necessity of robust preparedness and response systems, which continue to undergo refinement. Key efforts

Introduction

Since 2000, a series of outbreaks of novel and re-emerging infectious diseases—including coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), Middle East respiratory syndrome, and avian influenza infections in humans—have underscored the critical importance of preparedness for and response to infectious disease threats. In response, systematic approaches for investigating, analyzing, and evaluating risk factors for infectious disease

span multiple domains, including revision of legal frameworks to establish clear statutory authority; development of infectious disease information systems to support real-time surveillance, investigation, and analysis; implementation of epidemiological investigator systems to secure skilled response personnel; expansion of capacity-building training programs and response frameworks; strengthening governance mechanisms to enhance coordination between central and local governments; and advancing the development and supply of therapeutics and vaccines to prevent outbreaks and mitigate transmission.

Against this backdrop, the Capital Regional Center for Disease Control and Prevention initiated a study entitled “Development infectious disease coping strategy of capital area through hazard profiling” [4]. In this study, we aimed to identify ongoing management needs and areas for improvement in infectious disease response capacity within the metropolitan region, in anticipation of future outbreaks. Vulnerability to infectious diseases was assessed across the metropolitan area—comprising Seoul, Incheon, Gyeonggi, and Gangwon—as well as at the provincial, city, and county/district levels, with particular attention to vulnerability and response capabilities. Disparities in infectious disease response resources and capabilities were systematically analyzed, and the findings informed the development of tailored prevention and response strategies to serve as a foundation for policy formulation. This study presents the findings of a post-COVID-19 survey evaluating the infectious disease response capabilities of basic local governments within the metropolitan area.

It should also be noted that this paper was prepared based on a report [4] from the “Development infectious disease coping strategy of capital area through hazard profiling.”

Methods

1. Survey Overview and Content

To assess infectious disease response capabilities in the metropolitan area, this survey employed indicators reflecting transmission control and medical response capabilities applied during large-scale infectious disease emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Infectious disease response capacity was evaluated across multiple domains, including the availability and competencies of response personnel, the effectiveness of interagency coordination within the affected area, and the adequacy of secured response resources, such as quarantine-related supplies. Based on these domains, a set of evaluation indicators was developed through expert advisory focus group interviews, and clear operational definitions were established for each indicator. Consequently, 10 categories covering areas such as infectious disease response personnel, epidemiological investigators, education and training, consultative bodies, response plan formulation, quarantine supplies, and migrant management were identified, encompassing 42 specific indicator items. Data collection was subsequently conducted using a structured questionnaire administered in an Excel-based survey format (Supplementary File; available online).

1) Operational definitions

(1) Infectious disease response personnel

The term “(number of) infectious disease response personnel” refers to all regular and non-regular employees actively engaged in infectious disease-related duties at city, county, or district offices and public health centers, including branch offices and health clinics. Regular employees comprise public officials, including both general and specialized term-based positions.

Non-regular employees include part-time and temporary public officials, public service and fixed-term workers, participants in public work programs, short-term workers, and public health doctors. Health institution personnel encompassed within this definition include directors of public health centers, branch offices, and clinics; physicians; dentists; doctors of Korean medicine; pharmacists; nurses; nutritionists; health educators; medical technicians; nursing assistants; administrative staff; public health officers; and skilled workers. The infectious disease response department is used as an umbrella term encompassing the Infectious Disease Response Center, Infectious Disease Response Division, and Infectious Disease Response Team. The scope of infectious disease response work includes the management of nationally notifiable infectious diseases, as well as preparedness and response activities related to infectious disease emergencies. Personnel who occasionally perform duties unrelated to infectious disease control were excluded from the category of personnel dedicated to infectious disease response. A minimum service requirement of 2 years was applied by summing the duration of current and previous infectious disease response assignments in cases where personnel had transferred between departments. This requirement applied to physicians, dentists, and doctors of Korean medicine.

(2) Epidemiological investigator

The term “epidemiological investigator” refers to both certified and probationary individuals formally appointed to the role of epidemiological investigator. The classification of regular and non-regular employees follows the same definitions applied to infectious disease response personnel. Epidemiological investigator mentoring denotes a structured one-on-one system in which certified epidemiological investigators or more

experienced senior investigators are paired with trainees or junior investigators to supervise their work and support the development of professional competencies. The survey assessed whether opportunities to strengthen the capacities of epidemiological investigators were provided on a regular and continuous basis through education, mentoring, consultation, and advisory activities during epidemiological investigations. In particular, it examined whether trainees and certified investigators, or senior and junior investigators, jointly participated in field site assessments and practical training activities, such as data analysis, to enhance their investigative skills. The term “epidemiological investigator mentoring for infectious disease response personnel” refers to the arrangement in which at least one epidemiological investigator from the infectious disease response department provides education, guidance, mentoring, and consultation, as needed, to other infectious disease response personnel. This support aims to enable personnel to acquire the knowledge and skills required for effective infectious disease response. Emphasis was placed on the capacity of epidemiological investigators—by virtue of their specialized expertise and experience exceeding that of other response personnel—to provide appropriate intervention or assistance upon request in their respective areas of specialization. The term “statistical analysis and academic support for epidemiological investigators” refers to whether the organization allocates funds from its own budget to procure statistical software and to support academic activities, including expenses related to English-language editing and publication fees, necessary for statistical analysis, report preparation, and scholarly output by epidemiological investigators. Notably, even if such support is currently not provided in practice, the item was marked as “Yes” if the relevant allocation is reflected in the organizational

budget.

(3) Education, consultative bodies, and related components

In the education-related survey items, the term “completion” refers to the successful conclusion of training courses designated for each rank and position by the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency. The number of training sessions for infectious disease response personnel assigned to infectious disease response departments at infection-vulnerable facilities denotes the frequency, within the past year, of infectious disease response-related training provided to infection control personnel at facilities vulnerable to disease transmission, including nursing homes, long-term care hospitals, mental health promotion facilities, facilities for persons with disabilities, and other similar institutions. Disease information monitor registration and annual training refer to both the registration of disease information monitors at infection-risk facilities, such as hospitals, clinics, schools, industrial facilities, cafeterias, social welfare facilities, kindergartens, and daycare centers, and the provision of at least one training session per year. Training may be delivered in person, remotely, or through recorded video lectures and guideline-based instruction. Training content includes dissemination of infectious disease prevention and management guidelines, reporting procedures following the diagnosis of infectious disease cases, and reporting of infectious disease occurrence and prevalence status. Only training sessions conducted through in-person live instruction, live remote (video-based) instruction, or recorded video training and guidance were included.

For items related to consultative bodies, cases corresponding to any one of the four defined types of city/county/

district-level infectious disease response local government-medical consultative bodies were marked as “Yes.” These four types comprise the following: (1) the basic model (city/county/district government and local medical association, composed of the director responsible for infectious disease response and the local medical association); (2) the expert advisory model (city/county/district government, local medical association, and advisory group, utilizing networks including regional infectious disease management support teams); (3) the emergency and medical response model (city/county/district government, local medical association, and emergency center, including emergency transport systems involving emergency centers and fire headquarters); and (4) the integrated model (city/county/district government, local medical association, advisory group, and emergency center, reflecting integrated participation at both local and regional levels). The consultative body for infection-vulnerable facilities refers to a forum in which infectious disease response personnel responsible for managing infections at facilities vulnerable to disease transmission, such as long-term care facilities, long-term care hospitals, mental health promotion facilities, and facilities for persons with disabilities, participate to discuss infection prevention and control. Exceptional cases in which an infectious disease response local government-medical advisory body had already been established, and in which infectious disease response personnel engaged in infection control at infection-vulnerable facilities participated jointly, were also recognized as consultative bodies for infection-vulnerable facilities. However, it was stipulated that infection control officers from major infection-vulnerable facilities within the relevant city or province must participate and that key facility-related infection control issues be addressed.

Infectious disease crisis management countermeasures

were considered to be established only if all of the following components were included: clearly defined roles of responding agencies during an infectious disease disaster; the structure of the decision-making system, mobilization mechanisms and an inventory of facilities and personnel; measures for securing medical and quarantine supplies; training plans tailored to different disaster and crisis scenarios; and measures to protect populations vulnerable to infection.

The establishment of communication channels for immigrants refers to the development and operational use of networks involving human resources, foreign resident support centers, or private organizations capable of facilitating communication with immigrants from various countries. This includes securing a registry of foreign resident support centers or private organizations that can provide communication support through bilingual personnel and foreign residents of diverse nationalities, and the ability to mobilize these resources when needed. The number of languages used for foreign-language notices refers to the number of languages in which infectious disease-related notices, educational materials, and other documents are prepared and disseminated, corresponding to the principal nationalities of foreign residents within the local government's jurisdiction.

2. Participants, Methods, and Survey Period

Official survey request letters were distributed to all 95 local governments within the Seoul metropolitan region—comprising Seoul (n=25), Gyeonggi Province (n=42), Incheon (n=10), and Gangwon Province (n=18)—including the public health centers of each city, county, and district. The survey was administered by the designated responsible official in each jurisdiction and targeted infectious disease response personnel

working within infectious disease response departments (centers, divisions, and teams). Respondents included individuals holding key roles such as center directors, branch directors, department heads, section chiefs, team leaders, and operational staff. Each local government compiled its responses and submitted the finalized survey results. The online survey was conducted over a 3-week period, from September 26 to October 14, 2024. Responses were received from all targeted local governments, yielding a response rate of 100% across the Seoul metropolitan region.

3. Statistical Analysis

Relative evaluation indicators are expressed as mean values for each city, county, and district within the Seoul metropolitan region and subsequently grouped by metropolitan city or province (Seoul, Incheon, Gyeonggi, and Gangwon). The coefficient of variation was calculated both at the metropolitan city/province level and for individual cities, counties, and districts within each jurisdiction to assess variability. For personnel-related indicators, values were standardized as the number of personnel per 10,000 registered residents, calculated as: $(\text{number of personnel [persons]} \times 10,000) / (\text{registered population [persons] of respective local government})$. For absolute evaluation indicators, predefined benchmark criteria were established. The number of local governments meeting each criterion within a given region was then calculated and expressed as a percentage of the total number of local governments in that region. Compliance with each criterion was coded dichotomously (1=criterion met; 0=criterion not met).

Table 1. Status of infectious disease response capabilities by city, county, and district in the metropolitan area in 2024 (infectious disease response personnel)

Division	Indicator	Relative evaluation index						Absolute evaluation index										
		Average			Coefficient of variation			Require- ments	Satisfaction ratio (%)			Gang- won						
		All	Seoul	In- cheon	All	Seoul	In- cheon		All	Seoul	In- cheon		Gyeong- gi					
Total	Public health center personnel ^{b)}	11.5	7.0	18.5	6.2	26.1	1.28	0.50	1.66	1.01	0.51	-	-	-	-	-	-	
infectious disease response personnel in cities, countries, and districts	Percentage of full-time servants among public health center personnel (%)	57.3	65.9	59.3	53.2	54.1	0.21	0.28	0.18	0.18	0.19	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Whether an infectious disease response center or infectious disease response department has in public health center (presence/absence)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	More than 1	41	48	30	17	7
	Percentage of the infectious disease response staff in the infectious disease response center or infectious disease response department (%)	8.6	9.4	2.9	9.9	7.9	1.40	1.19	2.00	1.31	1.61	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Percentage of full-time servants in the public health center's infectious disease response center or infectious disease response department (%)	30.7	38.4	24.6	26.9	32.3	1.14	0.98	1.55	1.13	1.17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Percentage of personnel in infectious disease response divisions (centers, departments, teams) among the total public health center staff (%)	11.4	7.8	10.1	14.4	9.9	0.58	0.48	0.65	0.52	0.37	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Percentage of full-time servants in infectious disease response divisions (centers, departments, teams) among the public health center's infectious disease response personnel (%)	66.8	68.7	81.7	60.9	69.6	0.33	0.39	0.23	0.32	0.23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 1. Continued

Division	Indicator	Relative evaluation index						Absolute evaluation index								
		Average		Coefficient of variation		Require-ments	Satisfaction ratio (%)		All Seoul		In- Gyeong- gi		Gang- won			
		All Seoul	In- Gyeong- cheon	All Seoul	In- Gyeong- cheon		All Seoul	In- Gyeong- cheon	All Seoul	In- Gyeong- gi	All Seoul	In- Gyeong- gi	All Seoul	Gang- won		
	Percentage of personnel dedicated to infectious diseases in infectious disease response divisions (centers, departments, teams) within the city, county, or district (%)	62.0	69.5	53.2	63.8	52.4	0.50	0.48	0.54	0.45	0.59	-	-	-	-	-
	Percentage of infectious disease response personnel affiliated with at least two years of service in infectious disease response divisions (centers, departments, teams) with municipalities and counties (%)	10.8	15.2	4.9	9.2	11.6	1.76	1.55	2.15	1.71	1.63	-	-	-	-	-
	Percentage of fixed-term or professional servants in infectious disease response divisions (centers, departments, teams) affiliated with municipalities and counties (%)	9.7	16.2	9.4	10.0	0.4	1.24	0.78	1.18	1.18	4.12	-	-	-	-	-
	Percentage of physicians in infectious disease response personnel (centers, departments, teams) affiliated with municipalities and counties (%)	3.6	7.4	2.2	3.0	0.4	2.52	1.56	1.70	3.11	4.12	-	-	-	-	-
	Epidemiological investigation team members within public health centers ^{a)}	8.9	12.1	11.3	7.5	6.6	0.51	0.57	0.23	0.59	0.66	More than 10	53	68	90	36
	Contract-based quarantine personnel ^{b)}	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.6	1.96	0.78	1.75	1.21	1.44	-	-	-	-	-
	Contract-based quarantine personnel ^{b)}	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.6	1.85	0.93	1.70	1.03	1.28	-	-	-	-	-

^{a)}(The number of personnel described indicator in each local government×10,000)/resident registration population in each local government. Reused from the report of Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (2024) [4].

Results

1. Personnel

During the survey period (September 26 to October 14, 2024), the mean number of public health center personnel per 10,000 population across the Seoul metropolitan region was 11.5. By region, the corresponding figures were 26.1, 18.5, 7.0, and 6.2 for Gangwon Province, Incheon, Seoul, and Gyeonggi Province, respectively (Table 1) [4]. Because infectious disease outbreaks often require rapid activation of emergency protocols, particularly during the initial response phase, the efficiency of response operations is strongly influenced by the availability of regular or dedicated personnel. Accordingly, the survey assessed the proportion of regular and dedicated staff within the infectious disease response departments (centers, divisions, and teams) of public health centers and local governments. Incheon recorded the highest proportion of regular public officials among infectious disease response personnel in public health centers, at 81.7%. Among personnel working in infectious disease response departments at the city, county, and district government levels, the proportion of staff dedicated exclusively to infectious disease response was highest in Seoul (69.5%) and lowest in Gangwon (52.4%). Within the Seoul metropolitan region, Seoul also exhibited higher proportions of personnel with over 2 years of experience in infectious disease-related work (15.2%), fixed-term or specialized civil servants (16.2%), and physicians (7.4%) compared with other regions. In contrast, Gangwon Province had relatively higher numbers of dedicated pest control personnel and temporary staff at the city, county, and district levels, with both categories recorded at 0.6 personnel per 10,000 residents.

2. Epidemiological Investigator

The survey assessing the status of epidemiological investigators across cities, counties, and districts, as well as public health centers, within the Seoul metropolitan region, revealed substantial interjurisdictional disparities across key indicators (Table 2) [4]. The number of epidemiological investigators per 10,000 population was highest among personnel assigned to health centers in Gangwon Province (0.32) and lowest in Incheon (0.03).

At the city, county, and district government levels, Gangwon recorded the lowest proportion of personnel dedicated exclusively to epidemiological investigation (16.7%) and the lowest proportion of investigators with ≥ 2 years of service (25.9%). In contrast, the proportions were highest in Seoul, at 70.0% and 80.7%, respectively. These findings suggest that Gangwon relies heavily on investigators who have been recently appointed as regular employees, whereas Seoul maintains a workforce characterized by a higher concentration of dedicated epidemiological investigators with longer service duration.

Overall, the establishment of mentoring systems and the allocation of budgets for academic support to strengthen the competencies of epidemiological investigators were limited across local governments within the Seoul metropolitan region. Although Seoul and Gyeonggi Province demonstrated comparatively higher levels of mentoring system implementation and academic support, Gangwon Province showed marked deficiencies in both epidemiological investigator mentoring and the provision of budgetary resources for scholarly activities.

3. Education, Consultative Bodies, and Related Components

Across cities, counties, and districts within the Seoul

Table 2. Status of infectious disease response capabilities by city, county, and district in the metropolitan area in 2024 (relating to epidemiological investigators among personnel)

Division	Indicator	Relative evaluation index						Absolute evaluation index								
		Average		Coefficient of variation		Require-ments	Satisfaction ratio (%)		All Seoul	In- cheon	Gyeong- gi	Gang- won				
		All Seoul	In- cheon	All Seoul	In- cheon		All Seoul	In- cheon								
Epidemi-ological investigator staffing by cities, countries, and districts	Total (training+completed)	0.11	0.06	0.03	0.07	0.32	0.87	0.78	0.90	1.04	0.77	More than 1	89	70	37	89
	epidemiological investigators in infectious disease response divisions (centers, departments, teams) affiliated with public health centers ^{a)}	0.04	0.03	0.02	0.04	0.04	1.21	0.77	0.99	1.02	2.08	More than 1	64	80	71	28
Epidemiological investigators who completed the general course in infectious disease response divisions (centers, departments, teams) affiliated with public health centers ^{a)}	Percentage of full-time servants among epidemiological investigators in infectious disease response divisions (centers, departments, teams) affiliated with public health centers (%)	58.8	61.3	50.0	54.9	69.4	0.77	0.73	0.89	0.83	0.64	-	-	-	-	-
	Percentage of epidemiological investigators dedicated to epidemiological investigation in infectious disease response divisions (centers, departments, teams) affiliated with municipalities and counties (%)	51.6	70.0	38.3	58.9	16.7	1.14	0.71	1.13	0.72	2.00	More than 1	62	76	50	74

Table 2. Continued

Division	Indicator	Relative evaluation index					Absolute evaluation index										
		Average		Coefficient of variation			Requirements	Satisfaction ratio (%)									
		All Seoul	In-cheon	All Seoul	In-cheon	Gyeonggi		Gangwon	All Seoul	In-cheon	Gyeonggi	Gangwon					
	Percentage of epidemiological investigators with 2+ years of service in epidemiological investigators in infectious disease response divisions (centers, departments, teams) affiliated within municipalities and counties, dedicated to epidemiological investigation (%)	55.8	80.7	41.7	57.1	25.9	0.85	0.35	1.06	0.77	1.20	More than 1	69	96	50	69	44
	Mentoring among epidemiological investigators (presence/absence)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	More than 1	20	24	10	29	0
	Mentoring of epidemiological investigators with infectious disease response personnel (presence/absence)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	More than 1	33	40	40	38	6
	Statistical analysis/academic support for epidemiological investigators (presence/absence)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	More than 1	8	16	0	10	0

^{a)}(The number of personnel described indicator in each local government×10,000)/resident registration population in each local government. Reused from the report of Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (2024) [4].

metropolitan region, training-related indicators for infectious disease response personnel generally demonstrated low completion rates, with the notable exception of the field epidemiology training program (FETP) completion rate among public health center team leaders responsible for infectious diseases (Table 3) [4]. The FETP showed a comparatively higher completion rate than other training measures, with a regional average of 37.3%. In contrast, completion rates were low for training indicators targeting public health center directors; center, division, and section chiefs at grade 5 or higher with infectious disease-related responsibilities; infectious disease response personnel in public health center infectious disease response departments (FETP); and reserve disease control personnel among all public health center staff, at 13.5%, 14.0%, and 4.0%, respectively.

Regarding the establishment and operation of regional consultative bodies for infectious disease response in cities, counties, and districts within the Seoul metropolitan region, Incheon achieved full compliance (100%) in the formation of local government–medical consultative bodies. Seoul demonstrated relatively higher compliance in the establishment of consultative bodies for infection-vulnerable facilities (44%), while Gyeonggi Province showed comparatively higher compliance in the formation of patient transport consultative bodies (12%). Incheon also satisfied all six requirements specified in the indicators for the establishment and operationalization of infectious disease crisis management countermeasures. Regarding management and utilization of quarantine supplies, the indicator for assessing the monitoring and management of quantities and expiration dates was the only measure to achieve a 100% compliance rate across all regions. However, improvements were identified in storage-related indicators, particularly

those concerning adherence to guidelines for appropriate storage locations and recommended temperature and humidity conditions. With regard to infection control measures for migrants, Incheon recorded a 20% compliance rate in the establishment of communication channels for migrant populations. With respect to the availability of multilingual guidance materials, Seoul demonstrated the lowest level of utilization, with an average of 0.2 foreign languages used.

Discussion

This policy research project assessed the infectious disease response capabilities of all local governments within the Seoul metropolitan region. The organizational structures for infectious disease response varied across jurisdictions. At the metropolitan city and provincial levels, infectious disease-related functions were generally organized at the “division” level within health- and welfare-related bureaus. In contrast, at the city, county, and district levels, infectious disease prevention, response, and management activities were primarily implemented at the “division” and “team” levels, largely reflecting the organizational structures of public health centers. In Gangwon Province, only 7% of local governments met the prerequisite of establishing either an infectious disease response “center” or “division” within their public health centers. With respect to human resources, more than 50% of infectious disease response personnel at the local government level, including epidemiological investigators, were regular or dedicated staff. Although the number of regular term-based or specialized public officials, particularly epidemiological investigators, appeared insufficient at the city, county, and district (public health center) levels, this shortfall was partially mitigated through support

Table 3. Continued 1

Division	Indicator	Relative evaluation index					Absolute evaluation index										
		Average		Coefficient of variation			Require- ments	Satisfaction ratio (%)									
		All Seoul	In- cheon	Gyeong- gi	Gang- won	All Seoul		In- cheon	Gyeong- gi	Gang- won							
Local government- Medical council for infectious disease response	Establishment of local government-medical council for infectious disease response in public health centers (yes/no)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	71	48	100	71	83			
Local government- Medical council for infectious disease response	Establishment of local government-medical council for infectious disease response in public health centers (yes/no): type (basic/expert advisory/emergency medical response/integrated)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	71	48	100	71	83			
Local government- Medical council for infectious disease response	Number of meetings of the local government-medical council for infectious disease response in the city/county/district	1.6	1.1	1.5	1.8	1.9	1.36	1.99	1.09	1.41	0.96	More than 1	55	32	70	57	72
Council for response to infection-prone facilities	Whether a council for infection-prone facilities in the city/county/district is formed (presence/absence)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	More than 1	28	44	30	17	33
Council for transporting infected patients	Number of meetings of the council for infection-prone facilities in the city/county/district	0.3	0.5	0.6	0.2	0.1	2.86	2.25	2.49	3.88	2.83	More than 1	14	20	20	10	11
Council for transporting infected patients	Whether a council for infection-prone facilities in the city/county/district is formed (presence/absence)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	More than 1	9	4	10	12	11
Council for transporting infected patients	Number of meetings of the council for infection-prone facilities in the city/county/district	0.07	0.00	0.10	0.12	0.06	3.09	0.00	3.00	5.25	4.12	More than 1	4	0	10	5	6

Table 3. Continued 2

Division	Indicator	Relative evaluation index					Absolute evaluation index							
		Average		Coefficient of variation			Satisfaction ratio (%)			Require-ments				
		All	In- cheon	Gyeong- gi	All	In- cheon	Gyeong- gi	All	In- cheon		Gyeong- gi			
Establish-ment and activities of infectious disease crisis manage-ment measures	Infectious disease crisis management plan (presence/absence)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	84	92	100	76	83	More than 1
Manage-ment and use of quarantine supplies	Check and manage the quantity and expiration date of quarantine supplies (Masks, PPE, etc.) at least once a year (presence/absence)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100	100	100	100	100	More than 1
	Storage of quarantine supplies (presence/absence)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	96	96	100	93	100	More than 1
	Training of new employees (presence/absence)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	75	72	90	76	67	More than 1
Infection control for immigrants	Securing communication channels for immigrants (presence/absence)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	8	20	19	11	More than 1
	Number of foreign language announcements used (types)	0.6	0.2	0.6	1.1	0.0	3.47	2.44	1.70	2.78	0.00	-	-	-

FETP=field epidemiology training program; PPE=personal protective equipment. Reused from the report of Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (2024) [4].

and coordination at the metropolitan city level. These findings underscore the need for a comprehensive review and careful interpretation of policy research results. Overall, the results suggest that infectious disease response systems have undergone organizational restructuring accompanied by qualitative improvements in response capacity. However, the focus of this study was exclusively on infectious disease response capabilities at the city, county, district, and public health center levels and did not present results from surveys conducted at the metropolitan city or provincial levels.

During this research project, a comprehensive set of indicators was developed to measure infectious disease response capacity, drawing on field conditions and existing data sources. Using these indicators, the status of infectious disease response capacity at both the provincial and city/county/district levels—the front lines of infectious disease control—was assessed, and the relative strengths and weaknesses of individual local governments were identified. Nonetheless, substantial standard variability was observed not only across indicators and regions but also among cities, counties, and districts within the same region, limiting the generalizability of the findings. This heterogeneity may be attributable to intra-regional differences, including geographic characteristics, population density, administrative capacity, and operational practices. In addition, infectious disease response departments within public health centers encompass infectious disease response centers, divisions, and teams; however, most are organized at the team level. Accordingly, the results should be interpreted with caution. Given the diversity and complexity of infectious disease-related tasks and classifications, further caution is also warranted when interpreting survey results related to “infectious disease response departments” and “infectious disease response

personnel” [3].

Due to space constraints, only a subset of the findings from this policy research project could be presented in this study. Nonetheless, the project is remarkable as it identified metropolitan-level indicators associated with infectious disease response capacity in the post-COVID-19 context and provided systematic, region-wide survey results. Despite some limitations related to data generation, statistical methods, and the consistency of notation, the findings offer valuable baseline data that can inform efforts to strengthen regional public health systems. Future research is expected to further refine crisis response indicators that incorporate considerations of governance and sustainability, thereby enhancing preparedness for emerging and re-emerging infectious disease threats.

Declarations

Ethics Statement: Not application.

Funding Source: This research is supported Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (1790387-202400087).

Acknowledgments: This paper is a reconfiguration of the Study on Development infectious disease coping strategy of capital area through hazard profiling by Policy Research Services. We thank the members of the Division of Infectious Disease Control and Response, Capital Regional Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency, Seoul, Korea: Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, Sungkyunkwan University School of Medicine, Jae-Min Kim; Department of Preventive Medicine, University of Ulsan College of Medicine, Ulsan University, Eunjeong Noh; Department of Health Administration, Inje University, Su-Yeun Seo; Department

of Interdisciplinary Program in Biomedical Engineering, Pusan National University, Myung-Jae Lee.

Conflict of Interest: The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization: Jae-Hyun Park. Data curation: Jae-Hyun Park, Jong-Ho Park. Formal analysis: Jae-Hyun Park, Jong-Ho Park. Funding acquisition: Jae-Hyun Park. Investigation: Jae-Hyun Park, Jong-Ho Park. Methodology: Jae-Hyun Park, Jong-Ho Park. Project administration: Jae-Hyun Park. Software: Jae-Hyun Park, Jong-Ho Park. Supervision: Jae-Hyun Park. Validation: Jae-Hyun Park, Jong-Ho Park. Writing – original draft: JSS, SNK, KWH. Writing – review & editing: JSS, Jae-Hyun Park, SNK, KWH.

Supplementary Materials

Supplementary data are available online.

References

1. Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency Press Release (November 28 2022). Establishing and Utilizing Socioeconomic Indicators for Infectious Disease Crisis Response. [cited 2022 Dec 28]. Available from: <https://www.kdca.go.kr/kdca/2847/subview.do?enc=Zm5jdDF8QEB8JTJGYmJzJTJGa2RjYSUyRjQxJ-TJGMjE0MDgzJTJGYXJ0Y2xWaWV3LmRvJTNGcG-Fzc3dvcM0QlM0QlMjZyZ3NCZ25kZVN0ciUzRCUyNmZpbmRpbG53cmQlM0QlMjZmaW5kV29yZCUzR-CVFQyU5QyU4NCVFQSVCOVCVCMCVFQiU4QyU4M-CVFQyU5RCU5MSUyNnJnc0VuZGRIU3RyJTNE-JTI2ZmluZFR5cGU1M0RzaiUyNmZpbmRDbFNlcSUzRCUyNnBhZ2U1M0QyJTl2>
2. Kim TH, Chung W, Lee Y, Park J, Chio E. Development of socioeconomic indicators to respond to infectious disease crisis. Cheongju: Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA); 2024 Mar. Report No.: 11-1790387-000998-01.
3. Chae S, Yun GJ, Jun J, et al. State of local infectious disease response personnel before and after the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic. Public Health Wkly Rep 2025;18:1-16.
4. Pak JH, Noh EJ, Seo SY, Kim JM, Lee MJ. Development infectious disease coping strategy of capital area through hazard profiling. Cheongju: Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA); 2024 Dec. Report No.: 11-1790387-001171-01.
5. Bae MK, Oh H. A study on the evaluation of vulnerabilities for the establishments of infectious disease response policy in local governments. J Korean Reg Dev Assoc 2021;33:23-44.
6. Hwang H, Han SH. A regional approach to reducing vulnerability to emerging infectious diseases: vulnerability assessment and smart response policies. Seoul: Korea Institute of Public Administration (KIPA); 2021 Dec. Report No.: 2021-09.
7. Pak JH. Development of infectious disease regional vulnerability and disaster management capacity assessment tool. Policy Research Service; 2023.
8. Seo KM. A study on the vulnerability assessment method of local governments in the prevention stage in the case of an infectious disease disaster. Proc Korean Soc Disaster Inf Conf 2022;2022:150-1.
9. Bae MK, Oh H. Relative weight evaluation for the vulnerability indicators of infectious disease using analytic hierarchy process in local governments. J Korea Contents Assoc 2021;21:704-13.