



Fighting Strategy COVID-19

France

1. What is the COVID-19 fighting strategy of your government (National, local)?

The strategy of the government was to order the containment to clip the epidemiological peak. The goal was to prevent the intensive care beds from being saturated.

France is a centralized state. So there is no local policy about health.

2. What is the strategy towards the population (Mask wearing, containment ...)?

The strategy is the containment. During the containment, from 17th of March to 11th of May, only shops selling basic necessities remain open. The others (library, hairdressers, restaurants...) are closed. Schools are closed. People can only go outside to work, to go to shop, to go to an administration, to a short walk or a footing. Many companies are closed and there is less public transport.

From the 11th of May the reopenings are progressive. At first shops, businesses, schools for younger children will reopen. Then schools for older children, restaurants and pubs. Then theaters, concert halls, cinemas.

Into the land with few sick, the strategy is to identify them and to follow their contacts to try to keep the cluster under control. It's also the strategy after the containment for all the population.

3. Are there enough masks for the population in your country?

In 2009/2010 the Health Minister, Roselyne Bachelot, bought a lot of masks and vaccines in anticipation of H1N1 flu. They have been little used because, fortunately, the flu has little affected France. So she was harshly criticized by journalists and politicians who said she spent money for nothing. So her successors have given up keeping a strategic mask stocks and at the beginning of the epidemic there was not even mask for population.

The goal of the government is to have enough mask at the end of the containment. But a lot of them will be reusable cloth masks.

During the crisis, a lot of companies and individuals start making masks and even plexiglass visors.

4. Are there enough masks and personal protective equipment for health professionals?

In March there was supply disruption, mostly for masks and aprons. There was a lot of problems in some hospitals and mostly for city health professionals. So the government take the hand on masks production and distribution and a lot of local administration also bought masks in stranger countries.

At the end of March, there was no more masks disruption for health professionals. The aprons are still a problem. There was still problems in April with aprons.

In March it was also hard to find hydro alcoholic solution, but only during a short time.

5. What is the biological screening strategy (Polymerase Chain Reaction – PCR, serological tests...)?

In France the government ask to use PCR, because serological tests have not good results. But even with PCR there is a lot of false negatives because the sensitivity of the test is between 65% and 80%. Fortunately, the doctors learn to identify the disease with physical examination and scanner.

At the beginning, the strategy was to test in priority symptomatic patients and symptomatic care professionals.

When we had more testing, the government added people and professionals of the house for the elderly.

After the containment the strategy is to test every symptomatic people and their contact persons.

6. Do you have enough biological screening tests?

Not at all. It is very difficult to find reagent, collection kit and good bacterial culture medium. During the first weeks there was a lot of disruption. And because there was not the best tools, the sensitivity of the test decrease. In April the situation become better, step by step, with no more disruption at the end of the month.

7. Do you have enough beds for inpatients? (intensive care and other)

The 16th of March, the Health Minister asked to all the hospitals to stop scheduled activity, to open and to open covid19 units and to try to triple the number of beds in intensive care. So there was enough bed in all the country. The only problem was in the two regions more affected by the disease: Alsace-Lorraine and Paris and its suburbs. In this regions, there was not enough intensive cares beds, so they have to send patients in the other regions of France. Some patients of Alsace-Lorraine also went in Germany, Swiss and Luxembourg before the government organize the distribution of patients in France.

8. Do you increase the number of intensive care beds in your country?

Yes we triple it.

9. Do you have enough human ressources to manage the epidemic?

Yes because we stopped scheduled activity. So we closed a lot of bed and used their human ressources for covid19. Also we used medical students and nurses students. Also some retired doctors and nurses were volunteer to help.

10. Do you have guidelines for good practices between healthcare teams and physicians in the context of the COVID-19 crisis?

The Health Minister send a lot of guidelines to the hospitals and the professionals.

11. What are the main challenges for hospital managers during the COVID-19 crisis?

The biggest challenges are:

- To anticipate each stage of the crisis to always be one step ahead.
- To build a decision-making flowchart that is participative, responsive, that allows you to see all aspects of the subjects and which helps coordinate the actions of all the key persons and institutions.

- To organize the care of patients (Covid19 and noCovid19) with the others hospitals (public, profit private and non-profit private) of its territory. No hospital can alone manage the problem.
- To reorganize care in the hospital. To close or decrease a lot of medical units to find professionals for Covid19 unit. To teach in emergency to some of them to work in intensive cares.
- To build a good supply chain. One of the key issue is to have enough individual protection for the health workers, and to give send the good tools to work: respirators, curare drugs, laboratory tests...
- Especially during the first weeks to have a good communication so the health professionals have confidence in the management. This requires answering questions, being transparent, sending regular information, showing that the management has a clear strategy.
- To have clear orders and good discipline to avoid inappropriate individual initiatives.

12.Other important information?