

Thematic Session

Older Persons

Protecting and Sheidling the Elderlies

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BACKGROUND

The Covid19 Pandemic has surfaced a lot of weaknesses and inadequacies across all nations. No country was spared. The fact that the elderly are the most vulnerable population being affected by Covid 19, it came all as unprecedented to people in governance (when we are used to dealing with infectious disease and vaccine preventable diseases among children). It did not spare all levels of governance.

Baguio City, like all other cities worldwide, had been battling with the Covid-19 pandemic since its onset seven months ago. As of September 20, 2021, Baguio has a total of 21,841 cases, 433 deaths, and 18,116 recoveries.

Being a relatively small land-locked city with a land area of 57.49 square kilometers located on a plateau on the mountains of the Cordillera with an average elevation of 1,540 meters above sea level, it is the only highly urbanized city in the Cordillera Administrative Region in the island of Luzon, and being so, it is the center of regional and local administration, education, health services, trade and industry, the Summer Tourism Capital of the Philippines, as well as the gateway to the northern Cordillera province. As of 2020, we have a population of 366,358, a growth rate of 1.54 percent annually, and a population density of 6,386 persons per square kilometer. The elderly (60 years old and above) is about 7.8 % of the total population or 28,576. Age groups 20 – 29 and 30 – 39-year-old are 4 times more likely to be infected as compared to the persons who are under the age bracket 60-to-69-year-old. As compared to the 20 to 29-year-olds, the rate of death is 36 times higher in the 60 to 69-year-olds, and 31 times higher in those who are in the 70 to 79 age group (Addawe et al, 2021).

INTRODUCTION

In response to the COVID 19 pandemic, World Health Organization has developed guidance on how best to support vulnerable populations to prevent, prepare for and respond to possible community transmission of COVID-19. Vulnerable groups, including the elderly, have a higher risk of infection due to poorer baseline health status and fewer opportunities to seek care. They may have higher exposure to infection due to transient or crowded living conditions and face barriers to accessing sanitation. They also may be less likely to be reached with contextually appropriate and actionable information in local languages about protective measures and less able to carry them out. They may have less capacity for response to infection due to limited access to health and essential

services, as well as unfavorable living conditions. People in such vulnerable groups may not be able to complain of symptoms or have atypical symptoms or may not be able to communicate their needs for care.

The weaknesses and inadequacies range from health service provision, information system, and health human resource. Thus, there is a need to address these gaps to meet the demands of the crisis. The city of Baguio under the leadership of Mayor Benjamin B. Magalong has been recognized by various sectors both locally and internationally. Its Covid19 response are cross cutting and granular. Part of it is protecting and shielding the elderly through provision of services and an information system responsive to the needs of the elderly, and has aided various decision makers to come up with strategies and solutions through systems thinking to address their needs and demands.

Health services provision among elderly will entail essential package for Covid19 management from prevention, detection, testing, contact tracing, isolation and quarantine— an end to end approach in service delivery.

In addition, an information system to disaggregate data by age group, line listing and mapping where they are, and creating a support bubble for the elderly, developed by the city has improved service delivery and increase demand for Covid 19 Vaccination.

The City Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit has been updating the media on a day to day basis through the public information office regarding the status of cases highlighting the elderly. Through this, it creates awareness on people the vulnerability of the elderly, thus there's a shared responsibility of protecting and shielding of the elderly.

METHODOLOGY

This paper is a cross sectional study of the various strategies, programs, plans and actions of a highly urbanized city to address various concerns of the vulnerable population specifically the elderly. These include health information system and health and social services. Both are intentional and purposeful.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Health Information System

The City has developed its own, home grown Health information System named as the End CoV tracker in response to Covid 19. Deployed on March 20, 2020, it can be accessed at <http://endcov19.baguio.gov.ph>. Basically secured because it is SSL enabled, UAC via roles in user accounts. It applies principles of epidemiology of analyzing disease across a population: a) Person— End Cov19 Data Collection tool, patient demographics; b) Place— analyzing data across a space, overlay map of affected localities, c) Time— analyzes

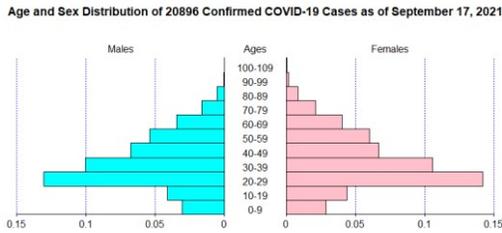
linkages of cases across time, including disease trends

Disaggregation is a key component of the analytics. It identifies disparity in terms of age, sex, and location. A more granular data-driven understanding of communities, individuals in a complex natural ecosystem can open new possibilities for well-being.

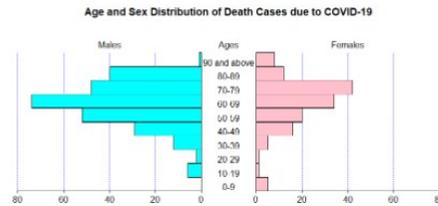
The following are some of epidemiologic outputs:

Figure 1.1

Age and Sex Distribution (March 2, 2020 - September 17, 2021)



Age Group and Sex Distribution of COVID-19 deaths



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Figure 1.2

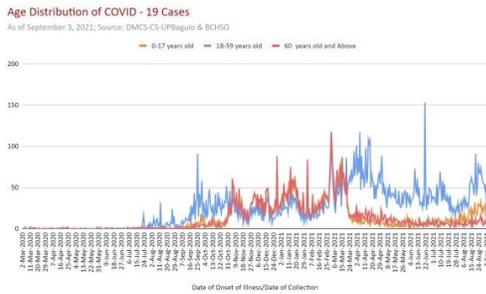
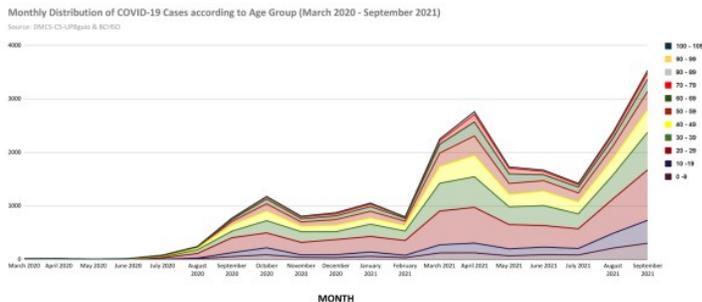


Figure 1.3

Monthly Distribution of COVID 19 Cases according to Age Group (March 2020 to September 19, 2021)



2. Health Services

The Prevent–Detect–Isolate–Treat–Reintegrate, or PDITR, Strategy is the City’s guide to managing its decisions and responses. Considering the complexity of the urban environment, there is a need to develop activities that are in most cases creative in nature with proper consideration to the context of the place and the people to which these solutions are directed t

The health care carrying capacity sets the limit to decisions. It is also the guide for the expansion and integration of all health services and infrastructure in order to provide a wider latitude of freedom for an eventuality of widespread infection or to be ready for the possible consequences as it starts a slow, safe, and sure re–opening of our economic activities.

1. Prevention
 - a. Age Specific Lockdown
 - b. Sunday Granny Day
 - c. Home Visitation
 - d. Maintenance Medicine Delivery
2. Detection
 - a. Free in RT PCR Testing
 - b. Priority in RT PCR Testing
 - c. Free Rapid Antigen Test among symptomatic vulnerables
 - d. Nursing home regular testing
3. Isolation and Treatment
 - a. Free Stay at Isolation facilities including food and water
 - b. Free hospitalization through National Health Insurance Program (NHIP)
 - c. Free enrollment to the NHIP
4. Vaccination
 - a. Priority in Vaccination
 - b. Mobile Vaccination among home–bound elderlies
 - c. Priority Lane in Vaccination Site
5. Reintegration

Baguio targets vaccination of 12K more elderly

By Liza Agoot July 29, 2021, 5:23 pm

BAGUIO CITY – The city government here targets to vaccinate over 12,000 more senior citizens who are yet to receive a coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) vaccine.

"With the mobile vaccination teams to be deployed to the different barangays, the city government hopes to expedite the inoculation of the most vulnerable sector," Mayor Benjamin Magalong said in an interview Thursday.

He said many senior citizens refuse to queue in vaccination sites for fear of exposure to the virus.



Baguio starts vaccination of elderly in 27 villages

By Liza Agoot April 21, 2021, 5:14 pm

BAGUIO CITY – The city government has started the initial vaccination of senior citizens in 27 villages from April 21 to 23.

Public Information Office (PIO) chief said Aileen Refuerzo on Wednesday said the first batch of senior citizen vaccinees will be the first registrants from barangays covered by smaller health districts.

The first day of inoculation rollout were those from Barangays Candara Subdivision, Ozon Subdivision, Lower Quimco Hill, Andres Bontoc (Lower Bontoc) in the morning, while those from Barangays Lower Quimco Hill, Maboa Quimco Hill,



CONCLUSION

The Covid 19 pandemic magnified every country's shortfall to protect or shield the elderly. The elderly are the most disadvantaged in terms of the risk of getting infected and getting hospitalized. There is a need to mitigate its impact thru systems approach and whole of government approach. These strategies are influenced by the city's mission of mitigating the effects of the pandemic on the health of its citizens, to enable everyone to function normally as a community, to minimize the economic consequences of the pandemic, and to plot our recovery by way of a greener and healthier urban agenda.

A feedback mechanism is paramount to accountability. Decision-makers, are likewise in the know of how the citizens are coping, so that it can respond to their concerns and requests in real-time, and adjust its decisions whenever it is deemed necessary.