

What will be the Impact of Immigration-borne Communicable Diseases on a Medium Sized Police Department by 2003?

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ABSTRACT

The study consists of two separate reports; a journal article and a technical report on the impact of immigration-borne communicable diseases on a medium sized police department by the year 2003. The Santa Monica Police Department is used as the city of study, with a development of strategic, implementation and transition management plans. The journal article is a critical study of the subject, written in a journalistic style and includes recommendations for future study and a bibliography. The technical report consists of five chapters. The report is written in a technical style, demonstrating raw data and its interpretation. Included are charts, graphs and illustrations plotting a total of ten future trends and ten events pertaining to the issue, along with the development of strategic, implementation and transition management plans. The selected strategy for both reports is the construction of an isolation unit in the city jail for the treatment and housing of prisoners with communicable diseases. Additional interview data and graphic instruments included in the appendices, along with endnotes and bibliography.

**THE IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION-BORNE COMMUNICABLE
DISEASES ON A MEDIUM SIZE POLICE DEPARTMENT
BY THE YEAR 2003!**

JOURNAL ARTICLE

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This Command College Independent Study Project is a FUTURES study of a particular emerging issue in law enforcement. Its purpose is NOT to predict the future, but rather to project a number of possible scenarios for strategic planning consideration.

Defining the future differs from analyzing the past because the future has not yet happened. In this project, useful alternatives have been formulated systematically so that the planner can respond to a range of possible future environments.

Managing the future means influencing the future--creating it, constraining it, adapting to it. A futures study points the way.

The views and conclusions expressed in the Command College project are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST).

INTRODUCTION

The main issue of this journal article is the impact of immigration-borne communicable diseases on a medium sized police department by the year 2003.

Why was this topic chosen for study over all the others? During 1988, The Santa Monica Police Department reported no worker's compensation claims for exposure to communicable diseases.¹ In 1992, the department processed 62 claims for exposure to tuberculosis and 7 for contact with the body fluids of people who were confirmed to be HIV+ or have AIDS.² Presently, two police officers on the Santa Monica Police Department are undergoing treatment after being found to have active tuberculosis. Both contracted the disease while on the job.

Why immigration-borne communicable diseases? Just fifteen minutes from the white sands of the city of Santa Monica is a section of the city of Los Angeles known as "Nuevo Los Angeles", or the New Los Angeles.³ It is a section of Los Angeles covering approximately 57 square miles. Deep within the city of Los Angeles lies this concentration of immigrants so large that it would be the nation's seventh largest city if it stood alone. The vast majority of the people living within "Nuevo Los Angeles" are illegal immigrants.⁴ Their housing is overcrowded severely, their health care substandard and their wages minimal. These citizens, mostly from Latin America, brought with them their culture, language, income and needs, creating a barrier from the mainstream of Los Angeles. One does not have to speak English to survive in "Nuevo Los Angeles".

Access to health care for them is limited, leading to a tuberculosis rate that is 75% higher than that of the rest of the country. The measles rate is more than 50% higher, while the AIDS rate is 17% higher.⁵ "Nuevo Los Angeles" is the most densely populated area in Los Angeles County, containing more people per square mile than high-rise Manhattan in New York City.⁶

Immigrants from Latin America and the Pacific Rim countries bring little in the way of material possessions with them when they cross our border. They do bring with them the diseases of their countries. Latin America is currently experiencing a tuberculosis epidemic, which has been predicted to continue and worsen over the next five to ten years.⁷ The number of reported AIDS cases in the countries of the Pacific Rim has increased faster than any other part of the world, and will continue at it's present rate in the future.⁸

As these immigrants come into California, they migrate to the sections of the cities most like their homelands. Thus, areas such as Nuevo Los Angeles, and Little Saigon in Orange county increase in population and density. All cities surrounding these areas are directly influenced by the changing demographics since the immigrants leave their communities in search of employment and recreation. Sections of the Santa Monica beach have been popular with the Hispanic community for several years. Each weekend during the summer approximately one half mile of the three miles of beach in Santa Monica is packed with Hispanic beachgoers. One of the two officers who contracted tuberculosis has traced the initial exposure to an arrest of a

Hispanic man on that stretch of beach.

The scope of the issue was limited to a medium sized police department, specifically the Santa Monica Police Department, because of the author's familiarity with that sized organization.

During the futures study of this issue by the author, a group of colleagues, using a nominal group technique, developed three sub-issues. This group also developed a list of future trends and events pertaining to the issue and the sub-issues. Forecasts for these trends and events were charted by the group. Reference throughout this article will be made to the forecasts for those trends and events. The reader should understand that if further information as to the forecasts is desired, the technical section of this study is available for clarification.

The three sub-issues developed by the NGT group are:

- 1) The ability of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department to incarcerate and house prisoners who have communicable diseases.
- 2) The future of police training in regards to the exposure to and/or contraction of communicable diseases.
- 3) The third sub-issue addresses the effect of immigration, demographics and population density on policing strategies in the lower socio-economic areas of the community.

FINDINGS

The first sub-issue deals with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, and their future ability to house and treat prisoners who have communicable diseases.

Presently, the Sheriff's Department assumes responsibility for the housing and treatment of all prisoners sentenced to county jail for their crimes. Independent cities within the county transport all prisoners with communicable diseases to the county jail hospital facility. It has been forecasted that the Los Angeles County jail will only be able to isolate one fourth the number of infected prisoners in five years, based on present levels. No isolation facilities will be available by the year 2003. Though, it has also been forecasted that Los Angeles County will need 50% more room than is presently available in the jails for the treatment of infected prisoners in the next ten years.

Sheriff Sherman Block, facing a \$100 million dollar budget deficit, recently ordered the closing of three county jail facilities, and he stated that more jails would be closed if the county can not find the funds to keep them open.¹⁰ The early release program for the county jails was revised so that prisoners are now only doing 50% of their sentence before release in an attempt to save the cost for daily housing of prisoners. Sheriff Block stated he may have to "lay off" up to 1,100 Deputy Sheriffs due to the budget cuts. The majority of them work in the county jail system.¹¹

Within the next five years, there is an 80% probability that the Sheriff will initiate a daily charge for all infected prisoners from outside police agencies within the county that are booked into the county jail. It is forecasted that this event will occur by 1995. The fiscal impact is tremendous for each city due to the extended treatment needed for both tuberculosis and AIDS.

Presently, it is not known what the Clinton administration will do to assist states with health care needs of prisoners, but when considering the federal budget deficit, assistance from the federal government is not probable.

Along those same lines, by the year 2003 there is an 80% probability that the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department will refuse all prisoners who have active communicable diseases. Though this event is not forecasted to occur for at least six years, police managers must face the problem today. Local hospitals have the ability to treat these prisoners, but not in a secure facility. It has been forecasted that in the future private hospitals will refuse to treat indigent people (those who do not have the ability or the insurance to pay the bill). There is a 75% probability this will occur within the next decade.

The availability of public health care services will decrease by 40% by 1998, and further decrease to only 30% of today's level of service by the year 2003. The probability of total collapse of the public health care system during the next ten years is 60%. Whether we experience a decrease, or total collapse of the system, there will be a negative impact on the

community. This impact will only serve to increase the number of infected people walking the streets, and increase the number of contacts police will have with these people.

Police training in regards to the protection from, and prevention of, communicable diseases by their personnel is the second sub-issue to be discussed. Presently, most police department realize there is a danger of their personnel being exposed to communicable diseases, whether it is a jailer, police officer on the beat, or a records clerk exposed while taking a counter report.

California State Representative Lucille Roybal-Allard said, "The fact of the matter is that we have to deal with illness prevention and education, or we'll pay for it on the other end. We are already seeing epidemics of tuberculosis in our cities, we are seeing diseases we didn't think we had to worry about anymore. We have to educate the people."¹²

California Governor Pete Wilson recently signed an Assembly Resolution(ACR 95), regarding occupational transmission of tuberculosis. The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the California State Employees Association joined in support of the signing of this resolution, which directs Cal-OSHA to set an airborne infectious disease standard to prevent the occupational transmission of tuberculosis.¹³

According to John Mehring of the SEIU, ACR 95 is important because California counted 4,869 new cases of TB in 1990, which is 15% more than the previous year.¹⁴ The State of California is quickly realizing that communicable diseases should be considered

an extreme hazard for those public employees who work in prisons, law enforcement, social services and other social institutions.

Most police departments in California now issue latex gloves and CPR masks to their officers, but little training is conducted regarding the recognition of the symptoms of tuberculosis and AIDS. This type of training is not a priority, though it has been forecasted that the Commission on Police Officer Standards and Training(POST) will mandate training in this area for all police departments within the next decade.

The third sub-issue deals with immigration, the changing demographics and population density in Los Angeles County, and the policing strategies necessary to address this issue. As presented in the introduction, "Nuevo Los Angeles" is not a unique community in California, or even in Los Angeles County. Many cities in Los Angeles County have smaller sections of their cities where ethnic groups from Latin America and the Pacific Rim countries reside. Each of these pockets of immigrants generally are found to be very poor economically and deeply rooted with homeland culture and socialization practices. It is forecasted that importation of cultural values and socio-economic levels will increase by 40% over the present levels within the next five years. By the year 2003, the increase will be 60% over today's level. As a note of interest, immigration will only increase 45% over the next ten years. The difference between the increase in immigration and the importation of cultural values is attributed to the fact that as the immigrant communities increase in population, the people themselves will become more reluctant to

change their lifestyles to one similar to that of this country. California may become a Latino "sub-continent" with Los Angeles County as the capital.¹⁵

How does this impact future policing strategies? Claims for the exposure to, or contraction of, tuberculosis and AIDS is forecasted to increase over the next ten years by 35% from present levels. This will increase the total number of officers on extended medical leave or medically retired for contraction of such diseases. Police managers will find it necessary to factor these decreases of personnel into their overall deployment for the future. Strategic plans to address the training and protective equipment necessary to prevent exposures must be made. Additional budgeted funds must be allocated for the purchase of the protective equipment.

It may become common to see police officers wearing protective equipment, such as latex gloves and face masks while arresting someone. It may be necessary for officers to wear protective equipment during routine contacts with the public in the areas where communicable diseases are most often found.

What will the Santa Monica Police Department do?

A strategic plan in regards to the issue was developed for the Santa Monica Police Department. The plan is unique to the department because of the physical layout of the police facility. But, the methods of planning and strategies used to implement the plan can be used by any police agency to assist in future planning.

In strategic planning, a mission statement is essential. The mission of the department was to ensure that all personnel were provided with education on the prevention of exposure to communicable diseases, issued protective equipment to reduce the probability of exposure, and lastly, receive a commitment from the department to aggressively participate in the development of a state and/or county strategic plan to reduce the number of exposures to communicable diseases by public employees.

With this mission in mind, an analysis of the organizations's strengths and weaknesses when dealing with the issue was performed. External environmental forces were evaluated. An attempt was made to blend the positive environmental forces with the strengths of the organization to accomplish the mission. At the same time the organizational weaknesses and any external threats were acknowledged so there would be no future surprises.

The next step in the planning process was to identify all stakeholders in the issue. A stakeholder was anyone, or any organization, that would impact, or be impacted, by the issue.

Having identified the stakeholders, and plotted each stakeholder's assumptions regarding the issue, a series of possible strategies for accomplishing the mission were developed. After careful evaluation of all strategies, one was chosen as the strategy for implementation.

The selected strategy to accomplish the mission was the construction of an isolation unit in the city jail to house and treat prisoners with communicable diseases. A training program

would be established and protective equipment issued to all personnel. The Chief of Police and members of the command staff would participate in local and state organizations to support and promote legislation in furtherance of the mission.

Transition is a very important aspect of any plan. It is a period when the concern is getting from the present to the future. Transition is never easy. There are always roadblocks and resistance from some. A good manager realizes this and can plan for a smooth transition. All members of what is known as the "critical mass" must be identified. Each of these individuals, or organizations, play a very important part since all can greatly influence the success or failure of the plan. A strategy to get each member of the critical mass to either accept or support the plan should be developed and implemented. Obviously, some are easier than others, but all must be analyzed.

The management structure of the organization was then looked at for the most effective manner in which the plan could be implemented. In the Santa Monica Police Department, it was found that a committee would be effective. This was due to the fact personnel from the different units that would be responsible for the management of the plan work in the same building, and work the same hours. Members were selected from the jail unit, the training unit, the financial unit and the patrol division. The committee would be chaired by an Officer Commander, who would report directly to the Chief. Methods of responsibility charting were used to minimize confusion, lack of communication and resistance by individual committee members. Progress reporting

and evaluation was essential to maintain the committee's energy level and identify any potential roadblocks and problems.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

During the study of the impact of communicable diseases on a medium size police department by the year 2003 several concerns were identified. These concerns were in the areas of training, protection against exposure to disease, housing and treatment of infected prisoners, and changes in policing strategies regarding management of personnel and patrol techniques in lower-socio-economic areas.

The police manager must first look at the individual agency and critically assess the organization's ability to deal with each of these concerns in the future. The strengths and weaknesses of the organization will give the manager a good idea of how the concerns will impact the agency, and what can be done to lessen the negative impact of the issue.

The community must be assessed, along with all outside forces that impact the issue. The police manager must always remember that the organization does not operate in a vacuum.

A strategic plan must be developed concerning the issue. Such things as fiscal planning, future training and what is best for the organization must be addressed.

It is absolutely essential that a change strategy be developed. The organization's leaders must ensure that the selected change be "sold" to all concerned, both inside and outside the organization. It is the responsibility of the

leaders to make the transition as painless as possible for all.

An implementation plan should be developed. Everyone who has a responsibility for the change must know their individual responsibilities.

Along with the implementation, a strong feedback and evaluation process must be developed. One of the most important factors the police manager must remember is that to effect any change in an organization, the process must be continually re-evaluated and changes made in the plan to maximize the impact of the strategy.

CONCLUSION

This article is not the solution. It is merely a suggestion and a sketch of how the Santa Monica Police Department may address the issue in the future. This article was written to communicate to the reader one way the impact of communicable diseases on a medium sized police department will be addressed. Hopefully, it has suggested some methods by which police managers can lessen the impact on their departments.

The impact of increased immigration and importation of the cultural values of those immigrants was explored. A direct link between immigration trends and communicable diseases was demonstrated.

The impact of communicable diseases on a police department and it's personnel was discussed. It is a universal problem that effects all police departments, no matter the size.

The future ability of the county jail system to isolate

infected prisoners was explored. Although the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department was the example, most county jail systems are quite similar and face similar future problems as those in Los Angeles County. It was concluded that the future could find the independent cities within each county solely responsible for the treatment and housing of any prisoner who has a communicable disease. This would bankrupt the majority of those cities.

The training issue was discussed. It was concluded that even though some training is now being done, a great emphasis must be placed on future training and purchase of protective equipment for all police personnel to reduce the exposure to communicable diseases.

RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE STUDY

As with all future study, this one is not static. There are many more possible futures that may appear regarding this issue. The real reason for future study is not to answer all the questions, but to get the reader to think about the issue. With many futures, there are many solutions.

It is recommended that future studies concerning the fiscal impact of communicable diseases on a police agency be developed. Throughout this study, the amount of money needed to effectively address the issue surfaced several times. In these times of diminishing public funds, a strategic plan to come up with the necessary funds seems to be of great importance to the issue.

Since the election of Bill Clinton as President of the United States, there has been an push for national health care

reform. This trend was too broad to be addressed, given the limitations of this study. The level of service from a national health care system will have a tremendous impact on the amount of health care immigrants will receive in the future. This emerging issue may greatly impact the issue and should be considered for future studies.

Whatever the final policy decisions are on any issue, the final recommendation is that the law enforcement leaders of today address tomorrow's problems now. Today's crisis situation was yesterday's future issue. The future is now!

ENDNOTES

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