

# **News Release**

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## **Cooperative Crisis Management and Avian Influenza: A Risk Assessment Guide for International Contagious Disease Prevention and Risk Mitigation**

One of the fading lessons from the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) epidemic in 2002-2003 is that “every hour counts” in an infectious disease outbreak. As an avian influenza pandemic crisis looms, planning and preparing become tasks larger-than-life. The human tendency to compartmentalize complex problems in the face of more pressing demands brings out the worst aspects of international preparedness: little communication, poor cooperation, and ineffective collaboration in the face of an unthinkable catastrophe. The lack of tools to evaluate preparedness or to identify weaknesses of individual countries creates a dangerous vulnerability to effective international cooperation.

A new study from the National Defense University’s Center for Technology and National Security Policy proposes a practical avian influenza risk assessment and mitigation strategy. This tool gives both national authorities and international organizations the methods needed to evaluate preparedness, identify country-level weaknesses and prioritize scarce resources to combat avian influenza or other communicable disease outbreaks. It is an essential tool for decisionmakers who must make crisis management choices in the face of limited information.

The case study demonstrates how the tool can be used. Senior decisionmakers, as well as village, town, city, state, provincial, national, and other public health and veterinary health officials around the world should consider these risk assessment results as a roadmap for preventive action and response. It will assist in communicating within and across government bureaucracies, educating the public on measures that will reduce the dangers posed by communicable disease outbreaks, and will enable the media to play a more proactive role both before and during a crisis. Finally, this tool will serve organizations such as the World Health Organization, the Food and Agricultural Organization, the World Organisation for Animal Health and potential donors and others responsible for prioritizing interventions at the global level.

The study can be found on the Center for Technology and National Security Policy website at:

[http://www.ndu.edu/ctnsp/Def\\_Tech/DTP%2029%20CCM%20and%20Avian%20Flu.pdf](http://www.ndu.edu/ctnsp/Def_Tech/DTP%2029%20CCM%20and%20Avian%20Flu.pdf)

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