

Study on the Status of Website Information Dissemination by Japan's Prefectural and Municipal Governments about "Evacuation and Sheltering during Natural Disasters" under Coronavirus Infection (Preliminary Report)

*SANO Hiroaki¹, Yohei CHIBA¹, Shinya MIURA¹, Yuichiro Usuda¹

1. National Research Institute for Earth Science and Disaster Resilience

Due to the spread of coronavirus infection (COVID-19) in Japan, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) and other ministries and agencies propose a "new way of life". This has led to changes in daily life and lifestyle in Japan. The proposal describes that particularly in the expansion phase of COVID-19, avoiding the three densities of enclosed spaces, congested areas, and close scenes is recommended. It then mentions that by keeping from these three conditions, the risk of cluster development, which is a factor in the spread of infectious diseases, can be avoided.

In recent years, earthquake disasters such as the 2016 Kumamoto Earthquake and the 2018 Hokkaido Eastern Iburi Earthquake, and heavy rainfall and typhoons such as the heavy rainfall event of July 2018, Typhoon Faxai and Typhoon Hagibis of 2019, caused extensive damages in Japan. In order to protect ourselves from such natural disasters, we need to avoid these risks appropriately. Especially during the upcoming rainy season and typhoon

season, we need to make sure that we do not suffer any damages. It is important to "avoid" the three conditions. However, it is difficult to avoid them under COVID-19 when evacuating from a disaster.

Therefore, the Cabinet Office's Disaster Prevention and Management Agency and other ministries and agencies are prepared for upcoming natural disasters with the Notification of Response to Novel Coronavirus Infections in Evacuation Centers (April 1st and April 7th, 2020). This notification states that "when a disaster occurs and an evacuation center is set up, it is important to take all possible measures against infectious diseases based on the status of COVID-19" (from the April 1 notice), and presents nine concerns as "reference for preparation in advance and response to disasters" (from the April 7 notice).

Keeping these in mind, the presenters aim to comprehensively understand the preparedness of prefectural and municipal governments for natural disasters under COVID-19, based on the directives issued by the Cabinet Office for disaster prevention and others. First of all, we searched official websites of prefectural and municipal governments all over Japan to collect information on "evacuation" or "shelters" under COVID-19. In addition, a map-based visualization application was released to enable these governments to holistically understand the status of information dissemination. We then discussed the establishment of a system to enable the national, prefectural and municipal governments to refer to each other's efforts and to obtain necessary and useful information for evacuation under COVID-19 conditions through the publication of the application.

Comprehensive collection of information regarding COVID-19×Disaster Evacuation and Sheltering was conducted in 37 prefectures and 666 municipalities (as of June 12th, 2020). We organized and mapped the collected information at the prefectural and municipal levels and published an application (<https://dil.bosai.go.jp/disaster/covid19/index.html>). This application aims to enable the national government, prefectural and municipal governments to mutually refer to each other's efforts to obtain and utilize necessary and useful information. In addition, based on the nine concerns from the April 7 notice,

we prepared a summary report of the efforts undertaken by municipalities and other organizations. This application was released on May 25th, 2020 and was viewed by 5,056 as of June 10th, 2020. The goal of this application is still in progress. Through the collection and accumulation of such case studies, we would like to extract cases and essences that can be applied to other regions. We also hope that this application will provide information that can lead to implementation of evacuation and sheltering in natural disasters, and countermeasures under COVID-19 in Japan as a whole.

Keywords: Evacuation, Sheltering, Web information, COVID-19, Natural Disasters

