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HARNESSING THE BENEFITS OF A ONE HEALTH APPROACH IN FOODBORNE OUTBREAKS

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Aim: Foodborne outbreaks are public health emergencies that can significantly benefit from the intersectoral and interinstitutional collaboration granted by the One Health approach. The OHEJP SimEx will provide a tabletop simulation exercise at a national level where participants will respond to a foodborne outbreak scenario practicing the One Health capability, capacity, and interoperability of the Public Health (PH), Animal Health (AH), Food Safety (FS) and Environmental Health (EH) sectors.

Methods: SimEx planning, including training, conduction and evaluation, started one year prior to the event by assembling a multidisciplinary team with complementary knowledge and skills. The team has used ECDC methodology to create a realistic exercise with a scenario adaptable to the prerequisites of participating countries. Conduction will take place during summer 2022, with the use of event based injects. Evaluation will be executed through facilitated discussions focussing on collaboration and communication.

Results: Currently 21 institutes within OHEJP and 4 institutes outside OHEJP from 12 countries will conduct the two-day exercise. The SimEx will contribute to increased national preparedness for zoonotic outbreaks, by promoting intra- and interinstitutional communication and information sharing. The lessons learned will contribute to the improvement of future public health emergency response.

Conclusions: Collaboratively working through a foodborne zoonotic outbreak exercise, provides the opportunity to share experiences, views, and perspectives across sectors and identify national collaboration gaps. The post-scenario evaluation will provide invaluable lessons learned and describe future improvements at a national level, improving each participating countries emergency response to future emerging One Health threats.

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