

DECISION MAKING PRINCIPLES SUPPORTING EARLY RESPONSE TO PANDEMIC: LESSONS IDENTIFIED FROM COVID 19

Paola Cane, Mia Solution Srl, Torino, Italy

[dx.doi.org/10.18374/IJBR-20-2.2](https://doi.org/10.18374/IJBR-20-2.2)**ABSTRACT**

The Covid19 pandemic in early 2020 found most of public and private institutions unprepared. Even after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the pandemic, many public and private decision makers failed to take rapid mitigation measures and responses to the virus. Reasons that determined late response in public and private sectors might be different and may include: the risk of being accused of fearmongering in over-warning the public reluctance to impose heavy restrictions that may interfere with personal rights to liberty, assembly, and movement; fear of constraining economic growth; concerns about losing business opportunities due to adoption of traditional risk assessment principles too often based on probabilistic evaluation or on cost-benefit or cost-effectiveness analyses. The decision-making process required to face an outbreak that could eventually turn into a pandemic is characterized by ambiguity and uncertainty: the situation is what the modern decision theory typically refers to as "decisions under ignorance" or ambiguity. Nevertheless, events such as COVID-19 clearly illustrate the value of early response, which essentially involves listening to early alarm signals, undertaking proactive mitigation strategies and ensuring a safe running of the business. The aim of this paper is to focus on possible decision-making principles supporting early response to be applied at the first alarm sign to take precautionary and preemptive actions in order to mitigate future outbreaks of pandemic flu.

Keywords: *pandemic response; decision making process; precautionary principle.*