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## **Health Risk and Crisis Communication on Covid – 19 In Marikina and Pasig: The Case of Two Philippine Cities**

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### **Abstract**

The COVID – 19 Pandemic is the greatest health crisis of our time challenging the dynamism of governments around the globe on rapid response as the key in addressing such health crisis. In the Philippines, it was a test of leadership, especially to local governments, to ensure public health and safety while ensuring the continuous provision of social services among its constituents. Health communication as an instrument of risk and crisis management has proven to be the most crucial aspect of governance in this time of global crisis. Thus, this study aims to shed light on the good practices and lessons learned from the local executives' efforts which will serve as benchmark for communication strategy and framework in the formulation of health crisis communication plan of local governments. A qualitative study, data on best practices of two Philippines cities – Marikina and Pasig – were drawn from key informant interviews with public information and/or crisis managers and 20 other informants/residents of said cities. Data collected comprised of current health risk and crisis communication practices and strategies, perception of informants and recommendations for LGU implementation. In conclusion, the study showed that local chief executives (LCEs) during COVID-19 relied on all forms of communication channels, specifically social and traditional media. Likewise, informants noted the exemplary efforts of local chiefs and opportunities for improvement on public information dissemination. With the recommended framework for crisis communication, LCEs will be guided in the context of responding to the current crisis as well as in future emerging health crisis.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Pandemic, health communication, local government, Philippines