



# DCD Bulletin

Division of Communicable Disease Control

### Issue highlights

- Pandemic (H1N1): No room for complacency!
- World Malaria Day 2010: Counting Malaria Out
- Global Fund Board announces Round-10
- Luis Figo in Jordan for TB awareness

## Pandemic (H1N1): No room for complacency!

Globally, the transmission of pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza virus is still occurring although pandemic influenza activity remains low compared to previous levels in the recent past. As of 25 April, more than 214 countries and overseas territories have reported laboratory-confirmed cases of pandemic influenza (H1N1) 2009, including over 17 919 deaths. Understanding that pandemics are unpredictable events, the Regional Office is still actively monitoring the progress of the pandemic through frequent consultations with Member States and monitoring multiple sources of information. The current influenza pandemic, the first for 41 years, appears relatively mild, certainly much milder than previous pandemics. This pandemic has proved disproportionately lethal to the young and pregnant women. There should be no room for complacency; countries need to be as vigilant as ever should a second wave of the pandemic sweep countries.

Further information is available at:  
<http://www.emro.who.int/csr/h1n1> and  
<http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html>

### D C D B u l l e t i n

This quarterly bulletin presents important news, events, publications and announcements from various programmes of the Division of Communicable Disease Control in the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean. For any queries or submission of material, please write to: DCD@emro.who.int, inserting "DCD bulletin" into the subject line.



*Luis Figo and Dr Hussein A. Gezairy addressing a press conference on TB in Jordan. Details on page 3.*

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## Programme news

### Roll Back Malaria

#### Yemen working to update malaria control strategy

A three-day workshop designed to update the malaria control strategy of Yemen was conducted in Sana'a, Yemen, from 14 to 16 March, 2010. The Undersecretary of Health Dr Majed El Jonaid inaugurated the workshop, which was attended by representatives of national and subnational levels of the malaria control programme and other departments of the Ministry of Public Health, academia, the private sector and nongovernmental organizations.

### Somalia reviews its malaria control strategy

The malaria control strategy for Somalia is being updated based on the outcomes of a workshop held in Djibouti from 29 to 31 March. Djibouti was chosen as the venue to facilitate the participation of representatives from the three zones of Somalia. The workshop was attended by Somali representatives of different zones and other stakeholders. Each section of the strategy was comprehensively discussed during the working group sessions.

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## Programme news (cont.)

The inputs presented are being incorporated both into the final strategy and the monitoring and evaluation plan.

### Promoting community ownership for malaria control

WHO through its community-based initiatives and Roll Back Malaria programme in Somalia conducted a three-day training course on community involvement in the prevention of malaria transmission through the use of long-lasting insecticide treated nets (LLITNs) in 15 basic development needs villages in the Lower Shabelle region. Driven by the need to enhance community ownership in health programmes, the initiative is part of a wider intervention to improve coverage and the use of LLITNs. The workshop participants will go on to advocate within their communities, provide health education on how to prevent malaria, and assist in implementing the distribution of LLITNs in target villages.

### World Malaria Day 2010

Based on the theme 'Counting Malaria Out,' a variety of activities to commemorate World Malaria Day 2010 were arranged across different countries of the Region as part of the global effort to effectively control of the disease. The commemoration of the Day internationally was held in Tanzania while in countries of the Region representatives of the Roll Back Malaria programme of the Regional Office participated in celebrations in Sudan. The Islamic Republic of Iran launched its malaria elimination strategy on the occasion of the Day and Afghanistan and Pakistan also launched a series of events relating to World Malaria Day.

### Tropical Diseases and Zoonoses

#### Training on the management of human African trypanosomiasis, Congo, February 2010

International training for medical personnel working in the management of cases of human African trypanosomiasis (HAT) and the practical use of eflornithine and nifurtimox combination was held in Kinshaha, Democratic Republic of Congo, in February 2010. The training was organized by the Tropical Diseases and Zoonoses programme of the Regional Office, in partnership with the sleeping sickness national control programme and the HAT control programme in Congo, and was addressed to French-speaking countries.

### Vaccine Preventable Diseases and Immunization

#### The Region observes first Vaccination Week

The first Vaccination Week in the Eastern Mediterranean was launched on 24 April, 2010 with the participation of all countries in the Region. The historic event coincided with similar endeavours in the WHO Regions of the Americas and Europe, taking the total number of participating countries and territories to 112. Vaccination Week provided a unique opportunity for countries to revive commitment to immunization programmes and increase public awareness on the importance of immunization through advocacy, education and communication. A variety of activities were carried out during the week. These activities addressed a wide range of vaccine-related issues such as outreach activities in Djibouti, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia; training sessions in Bahrain, Islamic Republic of Iran and Jordan; social mobilization in Morocco and Syrian Arab Republic; roundtable discussions in Somalia, Sudan and Tunisia; and media events in Egypt, Lebanon and Yemen. Moreover, formal ceremonies were hosted in many countries to launch Vaccination Week in the presence of high-level dignitaries, partners and the media (more information available at: <http://www.emro.who.int/vpi/vwem/>).

#### Workshop on measles, rubella virus detection held

An intercountry laboratory training workshop on measles and rubella virus detection, sequence and sequence analyses was conducted in Tunisia in April 2010. The workshop was arranged to analyse sequence information obtained through virologic surveillance in the Region in order to identify the geographic distribution of measles genotype D4. The workshop was attended by officials from Egypt, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan and Tunisia.

### Vector Biology and Control

#### Malaria vector resistance a real challenge in Sudan

The Vector Biology and Control programme participated in a review mission to Sudan to document the magnitude of malaria vector resistance to insecticides, identify contributing factors and propose recommendations to mitigate the prob-

(Continued on page 3)



*The Islamic Republic of Iran launched its malaria elimination strategy on the occasion of World Malaria Day*



## Programme news (cont.)

lem. The mission concluded that vector resistance—especially to pyrethroids—is a real problem in central Sudan; not only is it spreading but is also jeopardizing government efforts to scale-up other vector control interventions. The mission also observed that spraying operations with a different class of insecticide (carbamate) is not an option but essentially mandatory to curb the spread of this resistance as part of a broader management strategy.

### Stop Tuberculosis

#### World TB Day offers chance to renew fight against TB

Renewing their commitment to the control of tuberculosis, 21 countries of the Region participated in World TB Day activities held across 114 cities of the Region.

In the Region, countries marked the day in line with the global theme of 'Innovation to accelerate action' with music, under the slogan 'Together, singing the song of Stop TB.' The campaign was facilitated by WHO and supported by the Eastern Mediterranean Partnership to Stop TB. World TB Day is celebrated every year on 24 March. Last year, over 1.8 million young people from across the Region marched together on the occasion under the banner of the Million Youth March (further information on World TB Day activities is available at: <http://www.emro.who.int/stb/tbday010.htm> and [www.tbday2010.org](http://www.tbday2010.org)).

#### Global Fund Board announces Round-10

The Board of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has confirmed the launch of its tenth call for proposals for 20 May, 2010. Based on the Global Fund model of country ownership, countries will present proposals which, upon approval, will receive support in the fight against the three diseases. The Global Fund has requested that proposals should be based on a comprehensive needs assessment, including efforts to scale-up access to key preventive services for the three diseases through both public and non-public implementers. WHO will provide technical assistance in the development of country proposals. Further details are available at: <http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/>.

#### TB icons end Jordan trip on a note of success

Dr Jorge Sampaio, the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy to Stop TB and football icon Luis Figo, Goodwill Ambassador against Tuberculosis, wrapped up a successful visit to Jordan on 30 April, 2010. President Sampaio and Figo congratulated Jordan on its significant progress on tuberculosis and multi-drug

resistant (MDR) TB. They said that tuberculosis was a big public health and development concern in many Muslim countries and urged immediate action from the public, the media and policy-makers.

During the visit, the activities of President Sampaio and Figo included a visit to the SOS Orphanage and attendance at an awards ceremony at a charity Stop TB show organized by the Amman Riding Club and a visit by Figo to Petra Stadium at Amman's Sports City. They dined with HRH Prince Ali Ben Hussein and met with the Minister of Health of Jordan and Dr Hussein A. Gezairy, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, ending their visit with a press conference.



## Communicable Disease Surveillance and Response

### Dengue fever control efforts in Sudan

From 1 January to 30 April, Sudan reported 2602 cases of dengue fever from the Red Sea state, including 11 related deaths (0.4%) (Figure 1). About one-tenth of these cases presented with one or more haemorrhagic manifestations. Dengue virus-2 (DEN-2) was confirmed as the causative strain of this epidemic in the Red Sea state. The WHO's Surveillance, Forecasting and Response Programme has deployed a vector biologist in Sudan's Red Sea state to help contain the outbreak reported by the country at the start of 2010. The Regional Office is also extending support to contain the outbreak.

### Regional meetings on the IHR (2005) and human pandemic influenza

WHO organized two important intercountry workshops on the International Health Regulations

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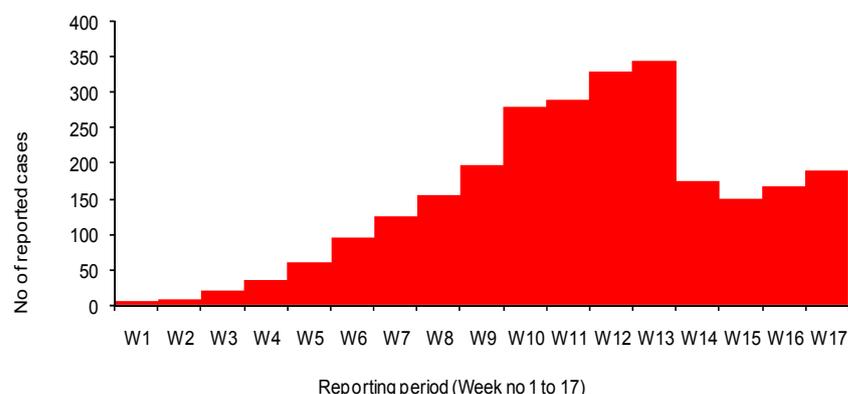


Figure 1. Suspected dengue fever cases in Port Sudan, Red Sea state, Sudan

*From 1 January to 30 April, Sudan reported 2602 cases of dengue fever from the Red Sea state*

## Programme news (cont.)

(IHR, 2005) in previous months. The first was a regional workshop on 'Monitoring implementation of IHR core capacities in the Eastern Mediterranean Region', conducted in Cairo from 29 March to 1 April, 2010. The objective of the workshop was to train IHR national focal points on WHO tools for monitoring implementation of IHR core capacities for surveillance and response. Except for Somalia, Iraq and Islamic Republic of Iran, all national focal points of the remaining 19 Member States of the Region attended the meeting.

The second intercountry meeting focused on 'Human pandemic influenza: establishing/strengthening alternative strategies for surveillance and response.' This meeting was attended by over 60 participants from 21 countries of the Region, except Sudan, including staff from the WHO collaborating centre NAMRU-3 and other UN agencies. In the last quarter, the Surveillance, Forecasting and Response Programme actively participated in four important regional network meetings relevant to their work.

### Research task force meets in May

The research task force of the Division of Communicable Disease Control at the Regional Office met in May and issued adhoc calls for urgent issues that could be finalized within short periods of time. All units will be invited to send urgent research topics and a consultant will be recruited to develop generic protocols for these topics. The selected projects will be funded by TDR funds and/or country resources, as applicable. It was also decided that the task force members would be responsible for: the follow-up on the progress of the implementation of research projects during their country missions and the implementation of research results during missions and managers' meetings by adding the dissemination of research results to the meeting programme.

## Calendar of events

- A workshop on Green Light Committee application for member countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council will be held in Oman from 30 May to 2 June, 2010.
- The first workshop on epidemiology and surveillance of leishmaniasis in Eastern Mediterranean Region will be held in Tunisia from 31 May to 11 June, 2010.
- A workshop on public-private mix approaches in TB care and control will be held in the Syrian Arab Republic in June or July 2010 (dates yet to be confirmed).
- A mock review of the Global Fund proposal applications from countries of the Region on AIDS, TB, malaria and health systems will be held in Cairo from 5 to 8 July, 2010.

## Health education messages

### How to protect yourself and others

#### Pandemic (H1N1) 2009



 <p>Cover your nose and mouth with a disposable tissue, a clean handkerchief or your upper sleeve when coughing and sneezing</p>	 <p>Dispose of used tissues properly immediately after use</p>
 <p>Regularly wash hands with soap and water</p>	 <p>Watch out for the main influenza symptoms: high temperature (above 38°C), runny nose, cough, headache, muscle and joint pain</p>
 <p>If you have influenza symptoms, keep a distance of at least 1 meter from other people</p>	 <p>If you have influenza symptoms, stay home from work, school or crowded places</p>
 <p>Avoid hugging, kissing and shaking hands when greeting</p>	 <p>Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands</p>

## Publications

The fourth portfolio of *Operational Research in Tropical and Other Communicable Diseases: Final Report Summaries 2007-2008* is now available online at:

<http://www.emro.who.int/tdr/index.asp>.

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