

DCD Bulletin

Division of Communicable Disease Control

DCD Bulletin

This quarterly bulletin presents important news, events and announcements from programmes of Division of Communicable Disease Control in the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean. For details, please contact dcd@emro.who.int inserting "DCD Bulletin" in the subject line.

Issue highlights

- Cholera, recurrent outbreaks
- Subregional meeting on dengue fever and chikungunya
- Strengthening national regulatory authorities' capacity in pandemic human influenza vaccines
- Review mission of the national malaria control programme in Sudan
- Ramadan donation campaign to raise funds for tuberculosis patients
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Cholera continues to claim lives in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

Cholera remains a major public health problem in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. From 2000–2010, 12 Member States in the Region officially reported 175 501 cases of cholera, including 4320 deaths, to WHO. Countries in complex emergencies are increasingly facing recurrent outbreaks of cholera and other epidemic-prone diarrhoeal diseases.

Cholera has re-emerged or has either been re-introduced in these countries as a result of population movement, compromised hygiene and living conditions of displaced people and depleted access of sheltered people to safe water and adequate sanitation. Disruption of primary health care services and failing health systems owing to protracted conflict in some countries in crisis have also resulted in some explosive outbreaks never seen before in these countries. In recent times, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Somalia and Yemen have all been facing outbreaks of cholera and other epidemic diarrhoeal diseases.

Although access to safe drinking-water and adequate sanitation systems is essential to prevent cholera, solutions cannot be achieved overnight. In the absence of rapid improvement of environmental conditions in the foreseeable future, the pressing challenge is to improve the surveillance capacity of Member States in the Region, particularly those facing recurrent outbreaks so as to early detect, respond and limit the spread of cholera outbreaks effectively, efficiently and timely. To this effect, the WHO Regional Office for

the Eastern Mediterranean is organizing the first ever training course on cholera and other epidemic diarrhoeal diseases in Beirut, Lebanon from 26 to 30 September 2011. The American University in Beirut is hosting this training course while ICDDR.B in Bangladesh and the programme of Disease Control in Humanitarian Emergencies in WHO headquarters have partnered with the Regional Office to run this course to be attended by 20 front-line health care workers from the Region, who are involved in the management and control of such outbreaks in their own countries.

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Programme news

Control of Tropical Diseases and Zoonosis

The tenth meeting of the Regional Programme Review Group on Lymphatic Filariasis Elimination

The tenth meeting of the Regional Programme Review Group on Lymphatic Filariasis Elimination was held in Cairo, Egypt from 29 to 30 June 2011. Participants were representatives of lymphatic filariasis programmes in Egypt, Sudan, South Sudan and Yemen, in addition to a representative of the Mectizan Donation Programme and WHO staff from the global programme to eliminate lymphatic filariasis and the Control of Tropical Diseases pro-

gramme in the Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean. Reports and plans from the four countries and also from Saudi Arabia were presented and discussed. The new guidelines for assessment of mass drug administration in the global programme were introduced to the meeting. Other technical subjects discussed included integrated vector control and difficulties in using immunochromatographic test (ICT) cards in diagnosis. Recommendations concentrated on morbidity control activities, vector control, moving towards mass drug administration in all concerned countries and operational research.

Surveillance, Forecasting and Response

Subregional training course on influenza-like illness and severe acute respiratory infections

A subregional training course on influenza-like illness and severe acute respiratory infections was held in Beirut, Lebanon from 5 to 7 July 2011. The course was attended by over 20 surveillance officers from selected countries in the Region and was supported by the Global Influenza Programme of WHO headquarters and the Influenza Division of the Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, United States of America.

The intended objective of this course was to train surveillance officers on the appropriate techniques and methods to be used for sentinel surveillance of influenza-like illness and severe acute respiratory infections.



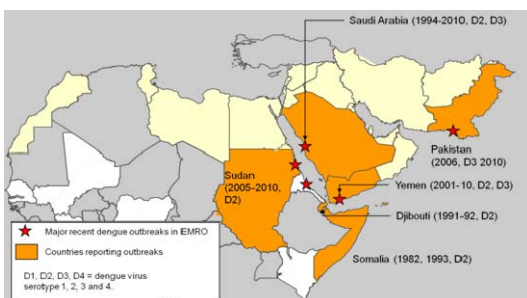
Subregional meeting on dengue fever and chikungunya, Cairo, Egypt

Subregional meeting on dengue fever and chikungunya

Dengue fever is the most widespread mosquito-borne infection and an emerging public health problem in countries of the Region. Epidemics of dengue fever/dengue haemorrhagic fever have been reported in recent times with increasing frequency and expanding geographic distribution of both the viruses and mosquito vectors.

In view of this increasing trend of dengue fever/dengue haemorrhagic fever, a subregional meeting on dengue fever and chikungunya for countries in the Red Sea rim was organized from 20 to 21 August, 2011 in Cairo, Egypt. The meeting brought together epidemiologists, clinicians, laboratory experts and senior level policy- and decision-makers representing the ministries of health of various countries in the Red Sea rim and other notable institutions working for the prevention and control of dengue fever/dengue haemorrhagic fever at regional and global levels. The meeting concluded with a call for action to control of dengue fever and Chikungunya using

an integrated control and surveillance approach for all vector-borne diseases.



Dengue outbreak reported in Eastern Mediterranean countries, 2001-2010

Pandemic and seasonal influenza activities

Knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding pandemic (H1N1) 2009 vaccine

Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 vaccine was made available in most countries of the Region in October/December 2009. However, utilization rate of the vaccine was low at about 14%, as most people declined it. Health care workers represented the largest proportion of those who declined the vaccine as compared with other priority groups for vaccination. The Regional Office has carried out knowledge, attitudes and practices studies regarding the uptake of the vaccine among health care workers as a priority group and university students as a non-priority group for vaccination in Egypt, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan and Morocco. The objectives of these studies are to: determine the public's knowledge, attitudes and behaviour regarding the vaccine; assess factors that influenced its uptake; assess the level of health literacy; and provide information for formulation of a local health education policy. Results of these studies will be published next month. The same study protocol has been used in the above-mentioned four countries to allow cross-country comparison.

Consultative meeting to strengthen national regulatory authorities for regulating the pandemic human influenza vaccines

Approving and releasing the use of the pandemic (H1N1) 2009 vaccine was one of the main challenges facing countries of the Region as the routine process of approving and releasing the use of vaccines cannot be applied to new vaccines in pandemic emergencies. As a result, the Regional Office organized a consultative meeting to take place in October to strengthen the capacity of authorities to evaluate the quality, safety and efficacy of any new vaccine to be used under emergency conditions. The outcome of the meeting will be draft regulatory pathway guidance that can be adapted by countries in approving and releasing a newly-produced vaccine to be used in emergency conditions.

Seasonal influenza vaccine effectiveness study

Seasonal influenza vaccination is recommended to prevent severe influenza and its complications.

(Continued on page 3)

Pandemic and seasonal Influenza (cont.)

Current global recommendations for seasonal influenza vaccination are based on data and experiences gained from some industrialized and middle-income countries. While influenza causes severe illness, hospitalizations and deaths worldwide, there is a general lack of data and experience in many low- and middle-income countries with respect to the disease burden and economic impact, as well as the safety and effectiveness of seasonal influenza vaccination. This lack of data on seasonal influenza vaccination has contributed to its limited introduction in developing countries. In order to address this need, WHO is providing support to Saudi Arabia and Morocco to implement a seasonal influenza vaccine effectiveness study to measure the effectiveness of the seasonal influenza vaccine in preventing laboratory-confirmed influenza among specified target groups and to estimate vaccine effectiveness by influenza subtype.

Malaria Control and Elimination

Review mission of the national malaria control programme in Sudan

A review mission of the national malaria control programme of Sudan was conducted from 24 May to 13 June, 2011. The mission aimed to technically review and assess current systems concerning parasitological confirmation of malaria diagnosis; assess current parasitological diagnosis for malaria in the northern states of Sudan and the available capacity for training in parasitological diagnosis and quality assurance. The reviewers were concerned as they described every level of the laboratory from routine microscopy to quality assurance and training as functioning poorly. Based on the findings of the mission a number of recommendations were made to the Federal Ministry of Health.

Training of consultants on methods of antimalarial therapeutic efficacy testing and malaria microscopy

A training course on the methods of antimalarial therapeutic efficacy testing and malaria microscopy was organized jointly by the Malaria Control and Elimination programme in the Regional Office and the Blue Nile National Institute for Communicable Diseases at Gezira University of Sudan from 12 to 27 July, 2011. Participants from Afghanistan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen attended the course which was facilitated by course instructors from Saudi Arabia, Austria, Egypt, Islamic Republic of Iran and Sudan.

Fourth meeting of the regional Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee

A meeting of the regional Scientific and Technical

Advisory Committee (STAC) of the WHO/UNEP/GEF-supported Project was held in Marrakech, Morocco, from 13 to 15 July 2011. Participants from Djibouti, Egypt, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Morocco, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen attended, in addition to regional STAC members, Stockholm Convention secretariat and DDT project coordinators from WHO African Region. The meeting reviewed the status of the regional demonstration project on DDT alternatives and identified challenges and constraints in the implementation of the demonstration activities in selected project countries. The meeting also reviewed reports on the status of the cost-effectiveness tools and data. The meeting ended with proposed recommendations and a presentation on the way forward for the timely implementation of the project.

Dr Abraham Mnzava, Regional Adviser Vector Biology and Control, joins WHO headquarters

Dr Abraham Mnzava, Regional Adviser for Vector Biology and Control has left the Regional Office to join WHO headquarters. Colleagues from the Division of Communicable Disease Control bade him farewell and wished him every success in his new capacity. He will be missed at the Regional Office. The Vector Biology and Control programme will now be supervised by Dr Hoda Atta, Regional Adviser for Malaria Control and Elimination.



Dr Abraham Mnzava joins WHO headquarters

Stop Tuberculosis

Ramadan donation campaign to raise funds for tuberculosis patients



For the month of Ramadan, the Eastern Mediterranean Partnership to Stop TB organized a donation campaign to raise funds for tuberculosis patients and their families. The campaign was led by national Stop TB Partnerships, national tuberculosis programmes and partner organizations in the countries. Benefiting from the unique opportunity of giving alms and charity in Ramadan, the Partnership organized the campaign in light of successful campaigns conducted in 2009 and 2010, in which generous amounts of cash and in-kind donations were raised.

Stop Tuberculosis (cont.)

Third regional workshop on multidrug-resistant tuberculosis

The third regional training workshop on multidrug resistance was organized by the Stop TB programme in Cairo, Egypt, from 17 to 24 July 2011. The workshop was attended by physicians with intermediate or high-level management responsibilities in drug-resistant tuberculosis care at national and/or provincial tuberculosis control programmes from Afghanistan, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Pakistan, occupied Palestinian territory, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and Yemen. The workshop aimed at providing knowledge, new perspectives and practical skills to enhance participants' capacity for decision-making in drug-resistant tuberculosis management and improve skills in its clinical management.

Global Drug Facility announces anti-tuberculosis medicine grant for the Libyan Arab Republic

The Global Drug Facility of the Stop TB Partnership in Geneva announced a grant of anti-tuberculosis medicine for the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in July, 2011. As a result of the humanitarian crisis situation in the country, the grant has been approved for 1 year.

Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria call for proposals under Round 11

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the leading financing institution, will be receiving proposals to fund interventions on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria along with health system strengthening under Round 11 by 15 December, 2011. Details of the proposal form and guidance are available at: www.theglobalfund.org, or can be requested from the Division of Communicable Disease Control at globalfund@emro.who.int.

Upcoming events

- Introductory workshop on Global Fund Round 11 call for proposals, Cairo, Egypt, 6–8 September, 2011
- Regional workshop on strengthening recording and reporting of multidrug resistant-tuberculosis cases, Cairo, Egypt, 13–15 September 2011
- Control of cholera and other epidemic-prone diarrhoeal diseases in humanitarian

emergencies, WHO training course, Beirut, Lebanon, 26–30 September 2011

- Research methodology and proposal development for research on communicable diseases, Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, 8–13 October, 2011
- Fifty-eighth Session of the Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean, Cairo, Egypt, 2–5 October, 2011
- First regional task force on cutaneous leishmaniasis meeting, Cairo, Egypt on 12–14 September, 2011
- Regional workshop on strengthening quality management systems for parasitological diagnosis of malaria, Muscat, Oman, 17–21 September, 2011

New publications

(Arabic) Enhanced Global Strategy for Further Reducing the Disease Burden Due to Leprosy (2011–2015). Please contact ctd@emro.who.int.

(Arabic) Enhanced Global Strategy for Further Reducing the Disease Burden Due to Leprosy (2011–2015), Operational Guidelines (updated). Please contact ctd@emro.who.int.

Guidelines for the programmatic management of drug-resistant tuberculosis (2011 update) WHO/HTM/TB/2011.6. Available at http://www.who.int/tb/features_archive/guidelines_drtb_prog_management/en/index.html

[The human African trypanosomiasis control and surveillance programme of the World Health Organization 2000–2009: the way forward](#). Free PubMed Central Article.

Somalia News Alert!



Waterborne diseases are lethal threat to children in southern Somalia

Rapid response needed as number of cholera cases increases

With an increased number of confirmed cholera cases in Mogadishu, and growing reports of acute watery diarrhoea in Kismayo and other crowded urban centres, an urgent multisectoral response to contain the spread of this highly contagious disease is being mounted.

The combination of poor sanitation conditions, a shortage of safe water, overcrowding and high malnutrition rates creates the perfect combination for infectious diseases, such as cholera and pneumonia, to spread and increase the number of deaths. About 75% of all cases of acute watery diarrhoea are children under the age of five.

For details, please visit: <http://www.emro.who.int/Somalia/index.htm>

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