

## Current major events

### Travel-associated dengue fever in Egypt

Recently (June 2010), the IHR National Focal Point of Italy reported to WHO of two laboratory-confirmed cases of dengue fever amongst the Italian travelers returning from Red Sea resorts in Egypt. These two cases were traveling together in early May and may constitute the first reported cases of dengue fever from Egypt for many years.

Upon being informed by WHO, the Ministry of Health in Egypt is, currently, conducting a field investigation to determine the public health risks in the area

### Editorial note

In recent time, Egypt was free from outbreaks of dengue fever. In 1799, the first dengue fever outbreak was reported from Cairo and Alexandria governorates. Another outbreak was reported in Port Said in 1871 (*Please see the table*). A decline in transmission of dengue fever was recorded in Egypt after the 1940s and was ascribed to rapid decrease of *Aedes aegypti* populations following introduction of DDT during and after the second World War in the country.

This is the first time in many years, dengue fever has been reported amongst European travelers returning from Egypt. The reporting of these two travel-associated cases of dengue fever from Egypt carries significant public health importance. It raises the fear of reinfestation of parts of Egypt with the vector -*Aedes aegypti* or, in worst case, introduction of a new dengue serotype in the area. Either of these two situations are clear harbingers of increased transmission. Therefore, the situation calls for an urgent action for Egypt in order to arrest an "expansion" of dengue fever in Egypt.

Dengue fever is one of the most important mosquito-borne diseases amongst the international travelers. Most of the travel-associated cases are infected while visiting the tropical areas and become ill only after returning home resulting in a constant movement of dengue virus to all areas of the world. Viremic returning



#### History of dengue fever in Egypt

- 1799: first documented outbreak in Cairo and Alexandria governorate
- 1871: Outbreak reported from Port Said
- 1880: Outbreak reported from Cairo
- 1889: Outbreak reported from Nile delta
- 1906: Outbreak in Port Said and Suez canal
- 1927: Outbreak reported from whole of Egypt (including Upper Egypt)
- 1937: Outbreak in Egypt (Area unknown)

Source: Berger S.A. *Infectious Diseases of Egypt*. 2010, Gideon Informatics, Inc, 367pp

travelers also present an on-going risk for introduction of dengue virus to areas not known to be afflicted by the disease before. Considering the public health risk to travelers coming to Egypt as well as to the local populations should dengue fever becomes endemic in Egypt, it would be prudent for the MoH in Egypt to conduct a detailed risk assessment of the situation including an entomological survey to determine the existence and possible geographic expansion of the mosquito vectors in the country.

Dengue fever has also been reported this year (2010) from areas surrounding the Red Sea rim. Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen have reported dengue fever outbreaks from the areas that surround the Red Sea. Considering this, the EMRO is planning for a sub-regional meeting in order to devise a long-term strategy to arrest/reverse the trend of emergent/resurgent dengue fever from the Red Sea rim. This would pave the way for a joint planning between the countries towards a coordinated cross-border approach for dengue prevention and control.

## Update on outbreaks in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

Cholera in Djibouti; Dengue in Yemen and Sudan

### Current public health events of international concern

[cumulative N° of cases (deaths), CFR %]

#### Avian influenza

Egypt	[109 (34), <b>31.1%</b> ]
Indonesia	[165 (136), <b>82.4%</b> ]
China	[39 (26), <b>66.6%</b> ]
Global total	[499(295), <b>59.1%</b> ]

#### Dengue fever

Sudan	[3000 (12), <b>0.4%</b> ]
Yemen	[5534 (7), <b>0.1%</b> ]

#### Meningococcal meningitis

Sudan	[ 819 (38), <b>4.6%</b> ]
Chad	[ 167 (12), <b>7.1%</b> ]

#### Pandemic (H1N1) 2009

AFRO	No of deaths: 168
AMRO	No of deaths: At least 8423
EMRO	No of deaths: 1019
EURO	No of deaths: At least 4879
SEARO	No of deaths: 1829
WPRO	No of deaths: 1838
<b>GLOBAL Total</b>	No of deaths: 18,156

CFR=Case-Fatality Rate