

Current major events

Preparedness for meningococcal meningitis geared up in Sudan

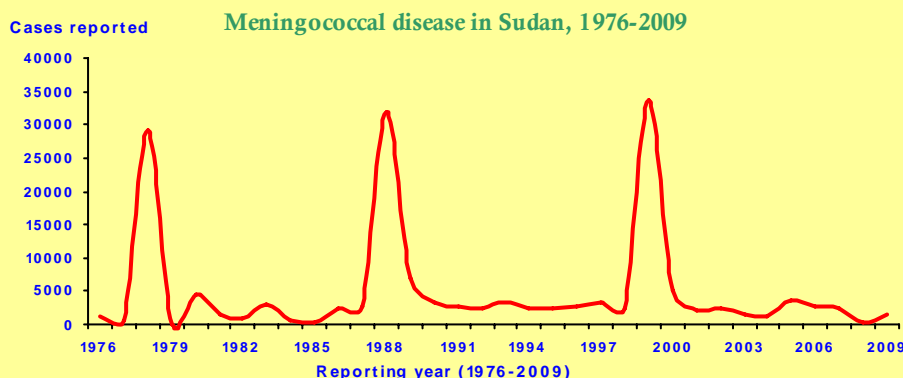
Since the beginning of this year, no outbreak of meningococcal meningitis has so far been confirmed in Sudan. However, some sporadic cases have been reported from Khartoum state (19 cases) and West Darfur (1 case) during the current high risk season. Enhanced surveillance for meningococcal meningitis has been strengthened in all the fifteen states of northern Sudan which fall in the African Meningitis Belt.

Editorial note

Since the beginning of the year, Sudan has not reported any outbreak of meningococcal meningitis except for sporadic cases reported as part of the enhanced surveillance for meningitis in the Country. It is worth noting that, three neighboring countries; Uganda, Central African Republic and Chad have already reported small outbreaks of meningitis since January. Within the African meningitis belt Burkina Faso has also reported outbreak of meningococcal meningitis from some districts.

Epidemic of meningococcal meningitis remains a major public health challenge in the African "meningitis belt". This is a "belt", that stretches from Senegal in the West to Ethiopia in the East. This area is characterized by the intensity of its recurring meningitis epidemics, affecting close to 400 million people and covering 21 countries. The annual incidence rates in the meningitis belt can reach levels as high 1000 cases per 100 000 population. Sudan is the only country in EMRO that falls within this meningitis belt.

Every year, Sudan and other countries of the African meningitis belt monitor epidemiologic situation of bacterial meningitis during the meningitis season through an enhanced surveillance, often activated in the beginning of the outbreak season. The aim of enhanced surveillance is to early detect meningitis outbreak and early identify the causative pathogen. This should lead to rapid implementation of control measures that



Enhanced surveillance of meningitis in African Meningitis Belt

General objective: To detect early, confirm, and respond appropriately to meningitis epidemics.

Specific Objectives

- To collect systematically and analyze surveillance and laboratory data on suspected cases
- To conduct rapid laboratory confirmation of causal pathogens
- To use this information for immediate public health control measures as well as monitoring the situation throughout the year.

should minimize the impact of the outbreak on affected populations.

Major outbreaks of meningitis has occurred in the African meningitis belt since 1976. These outbreaks occur in a cyclical pattern with an interval of 10-12 years between the cycles. The last major outbreak of meningococcal disease in Sudan was recorded in 1999/2000, that is ten/eleven years ago. WHO, Sudan and all the partners need to be aware of this and maintain vigilance. Even though, we have not seen any immediate threat of an outbreak, the Ministry of Health and partners should be prepared. The enhanced meningitis surveillance should be expanded and maintained in all high risk areas and throughout the Country. Contingencies for laboratory supplies, pre-stock of drugs and vaccines should be available in the Country. The coming months and the next meningitis season will be critical. Our success in containing an epidemic of meningitis and managing cases effectively will depend on our preparedness and ability to accurately identify the disease and laboratory confirmation of the causal organism.

Update on outbreaks

in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 in all the 22 countries in EMR. **Avian Influenza A (H5N1)** in Egypt; **Dengue** in Sudan

Current public health events of international concern

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

Avian influenza

Egypt	[102 (30), 29.4%]
Indonesia	[163 (135), 82.2%]
Global total	[481 (286), 59.5%]

Meningococcal meningitis

Chad	[167 (17), 10.1%]
CAR	[24 (5), 20.8%]
Uganda	[53 (2), 3.7%]
Burkina Faso	[949 (146), 15.3%]

Dengue Fever

Sudan	[311 (4), 1.2%]
Yemen	[906 (?), ? %]

Pandemic (H1N1) 2009

AFRO	No of deaths: 167
AMRO	No of deaths: At least 7433
EMRO	No of deaths: 1018
EURO	No of deaths: At least 4056
SEARO	No of deaths: 1562
WPRO	No of deaths: 1685
GLOBAL Total	No of deaths: at least 15,921

CFR=Case-Fatality Rate
?: Unknown