

From the Editor's Desk

Over the decades dengue/dengue haemorrhagic fever has emerged as a global public health problem with countries in Asia and the Pacific sharing more than 70 % of the disease burden. In some of these countries, DHF is gaining hyper-endemicity causing deaths among children. During 2004, Indonesia reported a major dengue outbreak encompassing Central Java, Sumatra and some outer islands. Till the end of July 2004, 69,017 cases of DF/DHF and 770 deaths were registered by Indonesian health authorities. During this epidemic DEN-3 was the predominant serotype.

Sri Lanka also reported a major outbreak with 12,400 cases and 71 deaths as of 23 August 2004. A majority of the cases were reported from five cities: Colombo, Kandy, Gampaha, Kalutara and Kurunegala.

In the South-East Asia Region, Bhutan and Nepal continued to enjoy dengue-free status till 2003 because of their sub-mountainous location. However, during August 2004, Bhutan recorded the first-ever outbreak of DF/DHF in Phuntsholing (population 27,000), a border town with India. During this outbreak a total of 2,544 DF/DHF cases with no deaths were reported. More than 93 % of those affected were persons above 5 years of age. This sent a strong signal to the adjoining DF-free north-eastern part of India and Nepal to take appropriate preventive action.

DengueNet, the WHO Global Surveillance System for management of epidemiological and virological surveillance data for early detection, planning and response, was launched in the South-East Asia and Western Pacific countries during 2004. Each country identified institutions which would participate in the programme.

The current Volume 28 (2004) of the Dengue Bulletin includes contributions from the South-East Asia Region (13), the Western Pacific Region (7), the American Region (5) and the European Region (4).

A supplement, featuring experiences from different countries in social mobilization and communication for dengue prevention and control, is also being issued along with this volume.

We now invite contributions for Volume 29 (2005). The deadline for the receipt of contributions is 30 June 2005. Contributors are requested to follow the instructions carefully while preparing the manuscript. Contributions accompanied by computer diskettes using MS Word for Windows should be sent to the Editor, Dengue Bulletin, WHO/SEARO, Mahatma Gandhi Road, IP Estate, Ring Road, New Delhi-110 002, India, or by e-mail as a file attachment to the Editor at denque@whosea.org. Readers desirous of obtaining copies of the Dengue Bulletin may contact the respective WHO Regional Offices in New Delhi or Manila or the WHO Country Representative in their country of residence.

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