

NTD News

NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES NEWSLETTER



Palau, Wallis and Futuna (France) and Viet Nam have eliminated Lymphatic Filariasis as a Public Health Problem

After over a decade of efforts, Palau, Wallis and Futuna (France) and Viet Nam have eliminated lymphatic filariasis as a public health problem. Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General and Dr Shin Young-soo, WHO Regional Director for the Western Pacific Region, congratulated representatives from the three countries and territories for this historical achievement during the sixty-ninth session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Western Pacific 2018 in Manila, Philippines.

1 NEWS FROM MEMBER COUNTRIES

Cambodia

In February and March 2018, the National Helminth Control Programme, working under the Ministry of Health and in collaboration with the University of Yamanashi, Japan, conducted screening for cholangiocarcinoma among the *O. viverrini*-infected cases, along with health education and mass drug administration (MDA) against *O. viverrini*, in high-prevalence villages in Prey Veng and Kampong Cham provinces. The results are being analysed.



© K. Miyamoto

Cholangiocarcinoma screening, health education and MDA in opisthorchiasis-endemic villages in Prey Veng and Kampong Cham provinces, Cambodia, February-March 2018

In May 2018, the National Helminth Control Programme, working with the Korean Association for Health Promotion (KAHP), investigated the burden of intestinal trematode infection in schoolchildren and residents in Preah Vihear and Stung Treng provinces.



© V. Khieu

Investigation of the burden of intestinal trematode infection in schoolchildren and residents in Preah Vihear and Stung Treng provinces, Cambodia, May 2018



© V. Khieu

MDA and stool examination activities in schistosomiasis-endemic villages in Kratie and Stung Treng provinces Cambodia, May-June 2018

From May to June 2018, the National Helminth Control Programme, working jointly with the local health authorities, namely the Provincial Health Department, District Health Department, local health centres, village health volunteers and village chiefs, and with the support of WHO, carried out a schistosomiasis monitoring survey. Using the Kato-Katz method, followed by a preventive chemotherapy campaign for schistosomiasis and soil-transmitted helminthiasis using praziquantel and mebendazole, the Programme intervened in 45 villages, including sentinel and spot-check villages, in Kratie and Stung Treng provinces.

In June 2018, the National Helminth Control Programme, in cooperation with the Ministry of Rural Development and with WHO support, continued the community-led initiative to eliminate schistosomiasis with water, sanitation and hygiene interventions (CL-SWASH) in four schistosomiasis-endemic villages in Kratie province. The CL-SWASH aimed to empower the communities to take control of eliminating schistosomiasis by understanding the linkage between schistosomiasis and sanitation, and taking action by building latrines and improving hygienic behaviour.



© M. Sinuon

Training of community members, household survey and presentation of the results of household survey by the Community CL-SWASH Team in Kratie province, Cambodia, June 2018

China

The National Institute of Parasitic Diseases under the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC) held the Fourth Symposium on Surveillance-Response Systems Leading to Tropical Disease Elimination in Shanghai, China, from 25 to 26 June 2018. Nearly 300 participants from more than 50 research institutions in 40 countries around the world joined the meeting, including representatives from the National Health Commission, Shanghai Municipal Commission of Health and Family Planning, WHO and the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute. Parallel sessions were held on malaria, schistosomiasis, other helminthiasis and cestodes, and on optimization of surveillance and early warning systems for imported parasitic diseases.



Fourth Symposium on Surveillance-Response Systems Leading to Tropical Disease Elimination, Shanghai, China, 25-26 June 2018

Fiji

The 14th round of MDA in Fiji was conducted in the Eastern division and Taveuni subdivision. The 4th targeted round on Malolo Island, following the failed transmission assessment survey (TAS) in 2015, was also completed in April-May 2018. The lymphatic filariasis (LF) program also utilised the Coverage Supervision Tool which showed over 85% reported coverage for treatment through direct observed treatment strategy among those surveyed.

The Seoul National University team gave a training course on soil-transmitted helminthiasis laboratory diagnosis from 14 to 23 May at the National Parasitology Laboratory. The course covered both the Kato Katz and Formalin Ethyl Concentration (sedimentation) techniques.

In 2017, the villages on Rotuma and Gau islands were randomised to receive ivermectin, diethylcarbamazine citrate and albendazole (IDA) treatment, or DA, in a 2:1 ratio. Half of the IDA villages received an additional dose of ivermectin after completion of the safety monitoring period in order to evaluate the efficacy of one versus two doses of ivermectin on community prevalence of scabies and soil transmitted helminths (STH) at 12 months. The long-term effect of the different treatment arms on community prevalence of the three infections will be reviewed at 12 months with repeat testing of all community members. The second phase of data collection to evaluate these secondary outcomes of effectiveness is scheduled to occur between July and November 2018.

French Polynesia

French Polynesia conducted MDA for elimination of LF in March and April 2018 in the south Marquesas and Leeward islands. School-based MDA and house-to-house MDA by volunteers to ensure directly observed treatment led to over 85% treatment coverage in both islands. In October and November 2018, the second school-based TAS will be conducted in Tahiti rural area and Moorea in the Windward islands, the Tuamotus, and the Austral and north Marquesas islands.

School-based MDA for elimination of lymphatic filariasis, French Polynesia, March-April 2018



© E. Lecalvez

Kiribati

The Kiribati Ministry of Health continued to implement the third TAS in the remaining outer islands (Abaiang and Maiana) of the Gilbert Islands in May-June 2018. So far 5218 people have been tested using immunochromatographic tests (ICT) or the filariasis test strip (FTS) and no positive cases have been detected. The last island, Banaba, will be reached in August-September 2018 subject to availability of transport.

The Kiribati Ministry of Health continued deworming preschool-aged and school-aged children and women of child-bearing age twice a year. The first round of deworming was completed by March 2018. Data on treatment coverage is awaited.

The Kiribati Ministry of Health implemented the second round of MDA for elimination of trachoma in all the outer islands in May-June 2018. The MDA in South Tarawa is ongoing.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic

A meeting to evaluate implementation of the Community-led initiative to eliminate Schistosomiasis with Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (CL-SWASH) after its launch in 2016 was held by the National Center for Environmental Health and Water Supply (Namsaat) working under the Ministry of Health, in Pakse, Champasak province, from 9 to 10 January 2018. The objective of this meeting was to review the achievements and challenges in implementing CL-SWASH in 24 villages since November 2016. Participants included the Department of Communicable Disease Control (DCDC), the Centre for Malariology, Parasitology and Entomology (CMPE), Namsaat, Champasak Provincial Health Department, the provincial malaria station, provincial Namsaat, district governor, and representatives from 10 villages where CL-SWASH has been implemented. The report is being compiled.



Evaluation meeting of CL-SWASH in Pakse, Champasak province 9-10 January 2018

A two-day training course for outreach teams from the health and education sectors in preparation for implementation of integrated MDA for schistosomiasis and STH, using a combination of praziquantel and mebendazole in six pilot sentinel villages, was carried out from 13 to 14 February 2018. The training was followed by implementation of MDA from 15 to 17 February 2018.



Health education activity for school children during the integrated MDA for schistosomiasis and soil-transmitted helminthiasis in Champasak province, 15 – 17 February 2018

From 27 to 29 March 2018, the Ministry of Health held a LF dossier development workshop in Vientiane, the purpose being to start developing the LF elimination dossier. The workshop was attended by DCDC and CMPE with the support of WHO, FHI 360 and the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International. The group collected and reviewed documentation and data right from the start of the LF programme in 2002 through to the implementation of the TAS1 survey in September 2018 and discussed how to complete the dossier development.

The schistosomiasis infection survey in potential animal reservoirs, including goat, dog, pig, buffalo, and cow, was initiated in June 2018 and is expected to continue to August 2018 in seven sentinel villages in Champasak province. The survey was led by the Institut Pasteur du Laos in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and with the support of WHO.



Collection of blood and faecal samples from potential animal reservoirs to assess schistosomiasis infection in Champasak province, June-August 2018

A series of intersectoral meetings between DCDC in the Ministry of Health and the Department of Livestock and Fisheries (DLF) in the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry were held in May 2018 to discuss development of a proposal for joint control of taeniasis and cysticercosis in selected pilot areas in Savannakhet province with the support of WHO and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). The proposal is currently being drafted.

Malaysia

The tenth round of enhanced MDA for elimination of LF was conducted in Lawas, Sarawak from 16 April to 24 May 2018. Drugs were administered with directly observed treatment according to body weight. A total of 16 258 eligible population received a single dose of diethylcarbamazine citrate (DEC) and albendazole with 92.14% MDA coverage.

Philippines

The Integrated Helminth Control Program (IHCP) of the Philippine Department of Health (DOH) organized a consultation to initiate the formulation of policies and guidelines to expand the deworming target group to pregnant women and women of reproductive age, and ensure that hard-to-reach at-risk groups such as selected indigenous peoples

or communities, and paramilitary and military personnel, were reached. The meetings were held in Manila on 21 June and 10 July 2018. This was in addition to the preschool- and school-aged children (1-4 years old 5-18 years old respectively) who are currently being targeted by the programme.

To improve the MDA campaign coverage and monitor implementation of MDA activities, the IHCP conducted a Training of Trainers (TOT) for regional level coordinators on the Coverage Supervisory Tool (CST) in Iloilo City on 22-25 May 2018. The trained regional coordinators will roll out the CST at the provincial and municipality level, involving Local Government Units (LGU) and Department of Education (DepEd) partners who are the service delivery points for deworming. It is expected that the roll-out training will be completed by the fourth quarter of 2018, in time to be used in the next MDA round in January 2019 and onwards.

The Department of Health, through the NTD Program, continued its implementation of the NTD Management Information System (MIS) project in three cities in the National Capital Region and three provinces in Region 7 covering both the communities and schools. Evaluation of pilot implementation of the NTD-MIS continued up to July 2018 by triangulating and comparing reported deworming coverage from three sources, namely: the NTD-MIS, programme reports from facilities, and results of coverage surveys at community level. Results showed that the NTD-MIS does better in Region 7 than in the National Capital Region. Program implementation reviews and on-site monitoring visits will continue to identify specific issues and challenges encountered at each implementing unit in order to determine steps to address them.

The Disease Prevention Control Bureau (DPCB) and Regional Office 8 of DOH forged a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) and Regional Agricultural Office 8 of the Department of Agriculture (DA). Under this agreement, the DA-BAI and Regional Agriculture Office 8 will lead the implementation of a demonstration project on the control and prevention of animal schistosomiasis under the “One Health Approach” in one of the endemic provinces in Region 8. Results of this project will be the basis of the formulation of a national policy by DA in control and prevention of animal schistosomiasis in the country. It is expected that the project will start in the third quarter of 2018.



NTD-MIS training in Cagayan de Oro City (Region 10), 22-23 March 2018



© P.M. Alpay

Monitoring visit on use of NTD MIS in municipal health office in Corella, Bohol, 3-6 April 2018

Samoa

In January 2018, the Ministry of Health of Samoa finalized and endorsed the national action plan to eliminate LF in Samoa 2018-2024.

The Ministry of Health of Samoa organized a series of national LF elimination steering committee meetings and consultations with stakeholders, including church leaders, school principals and community leaders between April and June 2018, to seek their engagement and support for the upcoming nationwide MDA campaign scheduled in August 2018.



© H. Lepaitai

Consultations with church leaders, school principals, community leaders and health workers on the upcoming MDA campaign, April-June 2018

The Ministry of Health of Samoa, with support of WHO, organized a meeting with the Department of Health in American Samoa in Apia, on 6 June 2018, to coordinate micro-plans and synchronize implementation of the upcoming MDA campaign in both countries.



© H. Lepaitai

A coordination meeting between Samoa and American Samoa to synchronize MDA plans for elimination of lymphatic filariasis, Apia, Samoa, 6 June 2018

Solomon Islands

The Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS), in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and with WHO support, assisted three new provinces (Malaita, Western, and Isabel) to prepare for initiating school-based deworming against STHs in 2019. This included developing strategic scaling-up plans for 2019-2020 to be included in their 2019 Annual Operational Plan. Up to 2018, only two provinces (Honiara and Guadalcanal) have engaged in STH school-based deworming. The program will continue engaging the remaining provinces to prepare their scaling-up strategic plan for 2020 and onward.



© R. Seyha

Consultation with health promoting school team in preparation for the implementation of the deworming program in Western Province, Solomon Islands

Following the recommendations of the WHO Expert Consultation to Accelerate Elimination of Trachoma in the Pacific, held in Melbourne, Australia, on 17-19 January 2018, MHMS carried out a trachoma ancillary survey in Solomon Islands with support of WHO, the Fred Hollows Foundation, and the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, in June-July 2018. Refresher training for the survey team was undertaken in Honiara, followed by examination of children aged 10-14 in two clusters, confirmation by WHO experts of all diagnoses by the designated MHMS field grader, and review of the quality of photographs of the limbus and conjunctiva taken by a specialist photographer. Dried blood spots were collected in exemplary manner. Laboratory analysis of the collected samples is continuing. The survey was completed and the findings will determine whether an additional intervention is required or not.



© R. Seyha

Teacher training where the NTD Coordinator was invited to share the basic roles of teachers on Deworming Day in Malaita Province, Solomon Islands

Vanuatu

Deworming against STHs was implemented throughout January-June 2018. The submission of treatment reports from health facilities, particularly remote ones, is still continuing.

Yaws case investigation and focal treatment continued in Tafea, Sanma and Shefa provinces over the period of January to June 2018. Based on reports or rumours within provinces, 20 cases were investigated within the three provinces for confirmed or suspected cases of yaws. A total of 531 children aged below 15 have been tested, of which 20 were confirmed positives, while 274 people were treated with azithromycin during the focal treatment.

Community health education workshops were organized in 17 villages including eight at high risk for trachoma and nine at high risk for yaws. The workshop involved a weekly health talk over 12 consecutive weeks. Subjects included prevention of NTDs, and soap distribution to encourage communities to participate in health promotion activities.

A total of 1826 scabies cases were reported through the HIS reporting system, whereas 23 scabies cases were diagnosed and treated as part of NTD surveillance integrated with activities on World Malaria Day in selected communities in Sanma and Shefa provinces.



Community health education workshops in Espiritu Santo, Sanma province on World Malaria Day, 23-27 April 2018



Integrated deworming and yaws surveillance in Sanma and Shefa provinces, May 2018



National NTD Planning Meeting at Mangaliliu village, Port Vila, March 2018

Viet Nam

On 9-11 May 2018, the Vietnam National Institute of Ophthalmology (VNIO) organized a trachoma elimination workshop in Hanoi. Experts from the VNIO, the Ministry of Health, WHO, the Fred Hollows Foundation and RTI International attended the workshop and assisted with updating a plan to help Vietnam eliminate trachoma as a public health problem. The group reviewed historical data on Vietnam's trachoma elimination efforts, identified districts that require further evidence of trachoma status, and agreed upon next steps and a timeline for the country to reach elimination.

2 REGIONAL NEWS

The Expert Consultation on the Elimination of Trachoma in the Pacific was held on 17-19 January 2018 at the Centre for Eye Research Australia, University of Melbourne, Australia, to review the outcomes of the post-intervention impact surveys in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu and discuss immediate and medium-term actions and priorities to accelerate elimination of trachoma as a public health problem from the Pacific. Consultation participants acknowledged progress made in the Pacific, including the contribution of trachoma elimination activities to strengthen local health systems and research capacity in the area of eye health and recommended a series of country-specific programmatic actions to accelerate elimination of trachoma in the Pacific.



Group photo of the Expert Consultation on the Elimination of Trachoma in the Pacific in Melbourne, Australia, on 17-19 January 2018

The Programme Managers Meeting on Neglected Tropical Diseases in the Pacific was held in Nadi, Fiji on 20-22 February 2018. The meeting was attended by 26 participants from 16 countries in the Pacific, 3 temporary advisors and representatives from 5 partner agencies. The meeting discussed the draft Regional Framework for Control and Elimination of NTDs, new WHO tools and guidelines, various country experience and challenges and regional priorities and support needed to accelerate elimination and control of NTDs in the Pacific. The particular focus was on the new WHO recommendation on triple drug therapy for elimination of LF, post-validation surveillance, morbidity management and disability prevention associated with LF, strengthening data reporting and control of scabies.



Group photo of the Programme Managers Meeting on Neglected Tropical Diseases in the Pacific in Nadi, Fiji on 20-22 February 2018

The Programme Managers Meeting on Neglected Tropical Diseases in the Asia sub-Region was held in Manila, Philippines on 13-14 March 2018. The meeting was attended by 14 participants from 8 countries in the Asia sub-Region, 6 temporary advisors and representatives from 2 partner agencies. The meeting discussed the way forward for accelerating control and elimination of NTDs with focus on foodborne and zoonotic diseases and also discussed the draft Regional Framework for Elimination and Control of NTDs in the Western Pacific from the Asia sub-regional perspective.



Group photo of the Programme Managers Meeting on Neglected Tropical Diseases in the Asia sub-Region in Manila, Philippines on 13-14 March 2018