

NTD News

NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES NEWSLETTER



Cambodia and Lao People's Democratic Republic Have Eliminated Trachoma as a Public Health Problem

After over a decade of efforts, Cambodia and Lao People's Democratic Republic have eliminated trachoma 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 health ministers from the two countries for this historical achievement during the sixty-eight session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Western Pacific 2017 in Brisbane, Australia.

1 NEWS FROM MEMBER COUNTRIES

Cambodia

From August to September 2017, the National Helminth Control Programme, Ministry of Health and in collaboration with the Ministry of Rural Development, continued to implement the community-led initiative to eliminate schistosomiasis with water, sanitation and hygiene intervention (CL-SWASH) in four schistosomiasis-endemic villages, two of which were in Kratie province and two in Stung Treng province. The CL-SWASH empowers 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.



Household survey conducted by a community CL-SWASH Team in Sdaomuy village, Stung Treng province, Cambodia, September 2017

The National Helminth Control Programme held its National Consultation Workshop to finalize the Schistosomiasis Elimination Action Plan in Cambodia (2017-2021) from 14 to 15 September 2017. Participants discussed the goal, targets, and strategic actions to eliminate schistosomiasis as a public health problem in Cambodia. National and provincial

representatives from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Rural Development, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, and WHO participated in the workshop.



Monitoring and supervision visit in Kaing Presath village, Kratie province, Cambodia, December 2017

The National Helminth Control Programme and Population Service International (PSI) continued to provide deworming against soil-transmitted helminthiasis (STH) twice a year (May and November) to workers and their families in plantations in eight north-eastern provinces of Cambodia (Rattanakiri, Mondulakiri, Stung Treng, Kratie, Kampong Thom, Kampong Cham, Tboung Khmum and Preah Vihear) for the third consecutive year.



National Consultation Workshop on Schistosomiasis Elimination Action Plan in Cambodia (2017-2021), 14-15 September 2017, Siem Reap, Cambodia

Country-wide prevalence mapping of *Opisthorchis viverrini* in Cambodia was conducted between September and November 2017, covering all 25 provinces of Cambodia. In each province, 10 villages were randomly selected and all individuals over 6 years of age in randomly selected households were enrolled and the collected stool samples were analyzed by the formalin-ether concentration method. The data entry and analysis of data are ongoing.



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Deworming campaigns for workers and their families in plantations in north-eastern provinces in Cambodia, November 2017

China

The National Training on Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS), Case Management and Laboratory Testing on Visceral Leishmaniasis Control was jointly organized by the National Institute of Parasitic Diseases (NIPD) of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and WHO from 13 to 17 November in Gansu Province. A total of 70 participants from seven provincial CDCs and 10 municipal CDCs attended the training, learnt WHO-recommended IRS and other spraying techniques and practiced the skills of wall-spraying, laying a good foundation for the prevention and control of kala-azar in Liting Village, Longnan City of Gansu Province.



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International Symposium for Cestode Zoonoses Control on 15 and 16 November in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China

An International Symposium for Cestode Zoonoses Control was organised in Chengdu, Sichuan Province by NIPD, the Sichuan CDC, and the First Affiliated Hospital of Xinjiang University on 15 and 16 November, and more than 200 people from 13 countries around the world attended. The international symposium discussed the latest strategies and tools in the control and elimination of taeniasis, and established the Belt and Road Network for the elimination and control of echinococcosis and cysticercosis.



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Left: Field practice of spraying for control of kala-azar in Liting Village, Longnan City of Gansu Province.

Right: The National Training on Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS), Case Management and Laboratory Testing on Visceral Leishmaniasis (VL) Control on 13 to 17 November in Gansu Province, China

Fiji

The Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services conducted the lymphatic filariasis (LF) transmission assessment survey (TAS) 3 in the Western Division (except for Malolo Island) in September and October 2017 and TAS 2 in Central Division in October and November 2017. While the number of children testing positive in both divisions was below the critical cut-off, 16 positives against a critical cut-off of 18 out of 2 467 children tested in Central Division gave rise to concern, and further analysis is currently under way. TAS 3 in the Northern Division (except for Taveuni Island) will be implemented in 2018. The remaining areas (Eastern Division, Taveuni island in the Northern Division and Malolo island in the Western Division) are planning to implement the second round of the additional mass drug administration (MDA) after identifying ongoing transmission of LF at the sentinel and spot-check site surveys in 2016.

The Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services has started the healthy school project which includes school deworming in selected primary schools. It works in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, with technical input from WHO and financial support from KOICA. The Technical Working Group, including representatives from WHO, developed a standard protocol to assess the baseline prevalence of STH among primary school students. The baseline surveys in the phase one schools (89) were completed by December 2017, and will be performed in the phase two schools (115) in the first half of 2018. Follow-up measures in phase one schools will be put in place in 2019. School deworming activities following the baseline assessments will commence in early 2018.

French Polynesia

The Ministry of Health of French Polynesia conducted TAS 2 in Tahiti urban area, using the filariasis test strip (FTS), and found no positives out of 1 189 children aged 6-7 years tested from September to the end of November 2017.

Kiribati

The Kiribati Ministry of Health implemented LF TAS 3 in part of South Tarawa between August and December 2017. A total of 2 487 primary school students were tested and no positives were found. TAS 3 was completed in the Line Islands in October 2017, where 526 primary school students were tested with no positives found. TAS 3 in the three remaining outer islands (Abaiang, Banaba and Maiana) in the Gilbert Islands will be completed in early 2018.

The Kiribati Ministry of Health continued deworming preschool-aged and school-aged children twice a year. The second round of deworming was completed by November 2017. Reported treatment coverage was 52% for preschool-aged children and 48% of the school-aged children. Women of child-bearing age (WCBA) were also given deworming tablets through community outreach activities. Treatment coverage among WCBA was 40%.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic

In preparation for the LF TAS 1 in Lao PDR, a TAS supervisor's workshop was held on 18 September 2017 to review the TAS protocol, responsibilities and FTS methodology with the support of the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (USCDC), and the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) ENVISION Indonesia team. The Department of Communicable Disease Control (DCDC) and the Centre for Malariology, Parasitology and Entomology (CMPE) in the Ministry of Health, with support from the team above, then gave on-the-job training to survey teams from 21 to 23 September.

TAS 1 was conducted after 6 rounds of MDA in Attapeu province, the only endemic province in the country, from 24 September to 13 October 2017. The teams tested 1 833 children and found no positives. TAS 1 thus passed successfully and the government of Lao PDR decided to stop LF MDA and move to post-MDA surveillance.

The Center for Environmental Health and Water Supply (Nam Saat), together with CMPE and DCDC, jointly implemented CL-SWASH in 14 new villages where schistosomiasis-infected individuals are still found and access to villages is relatively poor. This was done in the third and fourth quarter of 2017.

School deworming activity against soil-transmitted helminthiasis and MDA against schistosomiasis took place in October and December 2017, respectively.

Rotary International District 2650 from Japan participated in a MDA campaign against schistosomiasis and in CL-SWASH

activity in Thamakhep village of Khong district, Champasak province on 14 November 2017. The purpose of their mission was to explore an opportunity to support NTD control activities in Lao PDR.

CMPE conducted a technical meeting in September 2017 with staff from central-, provincial-, and district-level representatives from the Ministries of Health, Education and Sport, and Agriculture and Forestry to develop a guideline for the control of opisthorchiasis, taeniasis and cysticercosis in selected pilot provinces.



© Rotary International District 2650
Rotary International District 2650 from Japan participated in a MDA campaign against schistosomiasis in Thamakhep village of Khong district, Champasak province on 14 November 2017



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A primary school student being tested for evidence of filariasis infection during the filariasis transmission assessment survey from 24 September to 13 October 2017 in Attapeu province, Lao PDR

From 7 to 8 September and 19 to 20 October 2017, DCDC held meetings to develop a five-year action plan (2018-2022) to implement multi-sectoral control of opisthorchiasis, taeniasis and cysticercosis in a selected pilot province (Savannakhet) involving staff of the Ministries of Health, Education and Sport, and Agriculture and Forestry. The activity plan entails areas such as food safety, WASH, animal health, education, case detection and management, and M&E.

Malaysia

The Ministry of Health's national LF elimination programme carried out the enhanced MDA cycle 9 from 12 September to 9 October 2017 in implementation units (IU) Lawas, Sundar and Bangkalalak. These three IUs failed TAS 2 in 2016.

Mini-TAS was conducted in IUs Tangkarason and Medamit from 5 September to 13 October 2017, covering all children aged from 9 to 14. This was in response to the recommendation of the Consultation to Accelerate Elimination of *Brugia malayi* Transmission in Indonesia and Malaysia held in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, from 13 to 15 December, 2016. Both IUs passed mini-TAS and will proceed with TAS 2 in 2019.

By October 2017, all 55 endemic IUs that were scheduled for TAS 3 in Peninsular Malaysia (including Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah, Perak, and Pahang) implemented it and passed the assessment. These IUs will prepare for dossier documentation and continue with on-going surveillance.

Marshall Islands

Marshall Islands received official WHO acknowledgement for having achieved elimination of LF as a public health problem at the Pacific Health Ministers' Meeting held from 27 to 30 August 2017 in Cook Islands. The Regional Director of the WHO Western Pacific Region, Dr. Shin Young-soo, handed over the official letter to the Marshall Islands Minister of Health at the ceremony organized to celebrate Pacific health achievements.

The Federated States of Micronesia

Niue

Niue received official WHO acknowledgement for having achieved elimination of LF as a public health problem at the Pacific Health Ministers' Meeting held from 27 to 30 August 2017 in Cook Islands. The Regional Director of the WHO Western Pacific Region, Dr. Shin Young-soo, handed over the official letter to the Minister of Health at the ceremony organized to celebrate Pacific health achievements.

Palau

A cross-sectional survey to determine the prevalence of LF in migrant workers from Bangladesh and the Philippines, the two LF-endemic countries of origin of most migrant workers in Palau, was conducted from April to June 2017 with WHO support. The survey took account of the fact that over 20% of Palau's total population is made up of migrant workers and the LF infection rate in this population has never been assessed. A total of 893 migrant workers were tested using FTS. Of the 611 Filipino and 282 Bangladesh migrant workers tested, 28 (4.6%) and 24 (8.5%) were positives, respectively. The next step for elimination of LF in Palau is being discussed with WHO and LF experts.

Papua New Guinea

A mid-term sentinel and spot-check site survey in New Ireland Province was conducted in October 2017. Survey sites were selected in the following local level government (LLG) areas: East Coast and West Coast Tikana, Sentral Niu Ailan, and Namatanai Rural & Urban. A total of 1 312 individuals aged over 5 years were tested using the Immunochromatographic Diagnostic Test (ICT), ranging from 318 to 657 individuals per LLG. No positives were found in Kavieng district and 4 positives were found out of 655 individuals tested in Namatanai district, all of whom were from Namatanai Rural & Urban LLG. Three rounds of MDA were conducted in New Ireland Province from 2014 to 2016 but the fourth round, set for 2017, was not done because of nationwide financial constraints. The Government of Papua New Guinea is considering the adoption of triple drug therapy in New Ireland Province.

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