

本署檔號 Our Ref.: (49) in DH SEB CD/8/16/1/2 II

來函檔號 Your Ref.:

電話 TEL.:

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16 July 2005

Dear Doctor,

Vigilance against Japanese Encephalitis (JE)

On 16 July, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) announced that *Culex tritaeniorhynchus* samples collected at Yuen Long Park on 5 July 2005 were tested positive for JE virus. The government is taking stepped up measures to control mosquitoes in the area.

The JE positive mosquitoes were collected through FEHD's 12-month territory-wide JE vector survey commenced in October 2004. The survey covers both rural and urban areas and aimed at collecting update information on the distribution of the mosquito vectors to provide a scientific basis for strategic control.

This is the third positive finding since late last year. JE virus in *Culex tritaeniorhynchus* had been detected on two occasions in Yuen Long last year, one in association with the investigation of a human case and the other as part of the one-year JE vector survey.

It is known that JE is endemic among local pig population. Since Yuen Long Park is located in the north-western New Territories in which most of the pigsties are located, the detection of JE virus in *Culex tritaeniorhynchus* collected from those areas from time to time is not unexpected.

JE is a statutorily notifiable disease. It is a viral disease transmitted by the bite of infective mosquitoes. In Hong Kong, *Culex tritaeniorhynchus* (三帶喙庫蚊) is the principal vector. The mosquito becomes infected by feeding on pigs and wild birds infected with the Japanese encephalitis virus. The infected mosquitoes then transmit the virus to humans and animals during the feeding process. The transmission reaches its dead end in humans and is not directly transmitted from person-to-person. The mosquito breeds in water-logged fields, surface drainage channels, ponds, disused large water containers and sand pits. Besides being widely distributed in rural areas, the vector has also been found in urban areas including HK island as well as Sham Shui Po, Kowloon City and Kwun Tong districts in Kowloon.



During 1997-2004 in Hong Kong, there were 10 JE cases reported, including 6 local cases (1 in 2003 and 5 in 2004), and 4 imported cases (1 in 1997, 1 in 2001, and 2 in 2002). The incubation period of JE is usually 4 to 14 days. The disease may begin with non-specific prodromal symptoms lasting several days, followed by acute onset of high fever, severe headache, vomiting, photophobia, drowsiness, meningism and convulsion. Many infections are asymptomatic. Case fatality rate of symptomatic cases of JE ranges from 5% to 35%. Neurological sequelae may occur in up to 70% of the survivors of symptomatic JE infections.

An inactivated JE vaccine is licensed in Hong Kong but is currently only recommended for travellers to JE endemic areas in Asia and Western Pacific Region particularly in rural areas and staying for one month or longer.

To prevent JE and other mosquito-borne diseases, the public is advised to:

- Wear long sleeved clothes and trousers;
- Use insect repellent over exposed parts of the body when outdoors;
- Use mosquito screens or nets when the room is not air-conditioned;
and
- Remove stagnant water from surface channels and refrain from illegal cultivation.

If you encounter patients with signs and symptoms suggestive of JE, please report to the Central Notification Office (CENO) of the CHP by phone (2477 2772) or fax (2477 2770) or via the CENO on-line website (<http://www.chp.gov.hk/ceno>). Outside office hours, the Medical Control Officer could be informed through hospital emergency departments.

For more information on JE, please visit our website at <http://www.chp.gov.hk>

Yours sincerely,



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