



衛生防護中心
Centre for Health Protection

Risk Communication Advisory Group (RCAG)

Proposal on Risk Communication Activities to Support the “Three-year Strategic Plan for the Prevention and Control of Dengue Fever”

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to propose risk communications activities to be carried out by the Department of Health (DH) in supporting the “Three-year strategic plan for the prevention and control of dengue fever” promulgated by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP).

Background

2. Dengue fever is an acute mosquito-borne infection caused by the dengue viruses. This is found in tropical and sub-tropical regions around the world, such as South East Asia. Nevertheless, local cases of dengue fever have been reported sporadically. In addition, the number of notified cases in past four years significantly increased from less than 20 each year to 31 to 49 cases annually. These are indicative of an epidemiological transition in Hong Kong.



3. In view of great public health significance in its potential of causing rapid transmission and extensive epidemics, the resultant stress to healthcare system and the subsequent disruption to the society, the Scientific Committee on Vector-borne Diseases (SCVBD) under the CHP has conducted a review and formulated a three-year strategic plan for prevention and control of dengue fever in Hong Kong.

Strategic plan for prevention and control of dengue fever

4. There are five elements in SCVBD's strategy for prevention and control of dengue fever, namely (a) surveillance for planning and response, (b) disease management, (c) emergency preparedness, (d) behaviour modification and partnership building, and (e) capacity building and training. The recommendations of the three-year strategic plan are as follows -

(a) Surveillance for planning and response

- (i) Keep clinicians well informed of the surveillance case definitions, public health management, as well as latest dengue epidemiology
- (ii) Maintain a high degree of vigilance for dengue epidemics in nearby countries and provide readily accessible information and health advice to intended travelers
- (iii) Continue vector surveillance and disseminate information in a timely and user-friendly manner to support community efforts in vector control

(b) Disease management

Update and disseminate clinical guidelines for the early diagnosis and management of dengue fever

(c) Emergency preparedness

Review and update emergency response plans, with special emphasis on active case detection and investigation, emergency vector control, and media and risk communication plans

(d) Changing behaviours and building partnerships

- (i) Mobilize various sectors of the community in a sustained programme in dengue fever prevention and control
- (ii) Conduct regular surveys to monitor behaviour change and evaluate success of health promotion programmes

- (e) Capacity building and training
- (i) Build up surge capacity by providing training on clinical, epidemiological, entomological aspects of dengue fever and its public health management
 - (ii) Conduct training for medical personnel on diagnosis and management of dengue fever, which may include overseas clinical attachments and exchange programmes

Proposal on risk communication activities to support the strategic plan

5. To support the strategy on the prevention and control of dengue fever, it is considered that the CHP/DH should enhance its efforts in maintaining public alertness to the importance of the disease and sustained anti-mosquito efforts, and promoting sustainable behavioural changes at various levels. In this regard, a proposal on risk communication activities to be conducted by the CHP/DH has been worked out and the details are as follows -

(a) Objectives:

- (i) To disseminate the latest information on the local and global situation of dengue fever.
- (ii) To effectively convey the health advice on prevention of dengue fever to the public.

(b) Target group: General public at individual, district and community levels

(c) Proposed activities:

- (i) To disseminate the latest information on the local and global situation of dengue fever:

Activity	Action by
Disseminate information concerning imported cases of dengue fever through press release promptly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveillance and Epidemiology Branch (SEB) • Information and Public Relations Unit (IPRU)
Consider holding press conference upon confirmation of a local case of dengue fever	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEB • IPRU
Update the figures of dengue fever notifications in Hong Kong on websites of DH and CHP regularly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEB

Update information on dengue fever outbreaks in overseas countries on the website of DH's Travel Health Service regularly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Port Health Office (PHO)
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(ii) To effectively convey the health advice on prevention of dengue fever to the public:

Activity	Action by
Update dengue fever fact sheet on CHP website and health message in the 24-hour health education hotline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central Health Education Unit (CHEU))
Update bilingual dengue fever pamphlet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CHEU
Produce a new dengue fever pamphlet in ethnic languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CHEU
Broadcast TV and radio APIs on prevention of dengue fever and other mosquito-borne infections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CHEU
Organize roving exhibitions in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CHEU
Arrange media interviews in electronic and printed mass media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CHEU IPRU
Strengthen health message dissemination at border control points targeting outbound travelers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PHO
Liaise with community leaders/groups to organize activities for the prevention of dengue fever and other mosquito-borne infections at district level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Liaison Division (CLD)

(d) Collaboration with stakeholders

Behaviour change interventions are crucial to the prevention and control of dengue fever. Source reduction is currently the approach to eliminate mosquito breeding. The Anti-mosquito Steering Committee (AMSC), an interdepartmental committee led by the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau, was set up in 2002 to oversee the strategy and direction setting in mosquito control and to ensure involvement of stakeholders at all levels. Under the guidance of the AMSC, the CHP/DH will support the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department to carry out regular territory-wide anti-mosquito campaigns, and collaborate with various stakeholders to promote sustainable behavioural changes at the individual, household, institution and community levels.

(e) Monitoring and evaluation

There was no international/local consensus on the indicators for evaluation of programmes on dengue fever. The two surveys commissioned by DH, one conducted in 2002 on evaluation of the anti-dengue fever campaign and the other conducted in 2003 on public awareness on the prevention of dengue fever, found that the respondents' knowledge on the disease was generally satisfactory but their practice on anti-mosquito measures had to be strengthened. The CHP/DH would conduct surveys at regular intervals to measure changes in public awareness, knowledge and attitude on preventive measures of dengue fever, and to evaluate their changes in anti-mosquito behaviour.

Advice sought

6. Members are invited to note and comment on the proposal on risk communication activities in paragraph 5.

Centre for Health Protection

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