



Afghanistan weekly highlights aims to provide an overview of the country's health issues and of the World Health Organization (WHO)'s emergency preparedness and response activities.

WHO Representative in Afghanistan Mr Peter Graaff visited the Momindara Repatriation Centre in Nangahar province in Eastern Afghanistan to assess the health services offered in the centre and to consider future collaborative activities with UN agencies and non-government organizations working for displaced families in Afghanistan.

Health issues and activities

Disease early warning system (DEWS), Week 37 of 2008

- In Afghanistan, main causes of consultations are acute respiratory infection and ADD. There were 45 death cases reported and out of which, 15 cases were due to pneumonia (children less than 5 years), 9 were due to diarrheal diseases, 19 deaths were reported due to meningitis and severely ill children for the less than five year old children.
- Four suspected outbreaks were investigated: anthrax outbreak in Badakhshan; suspected pertussis outbreak in Ghazni; suspected diarrhea outbreak in Takhar; suspected cholera outbreak in Khogiani, Nangarhar Province.

Vaccine Preventable Diseases

- 155 suspected meningitis/SIC cases were reported from 129 sentinel sites. The highest number of cases was reported from Balkh region with 92 cases and followed by Herat region which reported 15 cases.
- 125 suspected acute viral hepatitis cases were reported from all regions. The highest cases of suspected acute viral hepatitis were reported from Kabul with 57 cases and Nangahar region with 14 cases.
- 13 suspected measles cases, 7 suspected Pertussis cases, and 8 suspected AFP cases were reported from the reporting units.
- One suspected diphtheria event was reported from Herat region.

Outbreaks, investigations and responses

- A suspected Anthrax outbreak in Badakhshan Province was reported in week 37. DEWS and veterinary team moved to the area to investigate the cases.
- A suspected pertussis outbreak in Nawabad Village of Ghazni City of Ghazni Province was reported

to DEWS on September 06, 2008. Investigation of the reported cases was carried out. 17 cases were registered and treated. Laboratory specimens were collected for confirmation.

- A suspected diarrhea outbreak in Khwaja Bahawodin District of Takhar Province was reported. DEWS team was dispatched to the area for further investigation of the cases.
- A suspected cholera outbreak was reported in Morgay Perakhil and Spin Raghya Perakhil, Khogiani District in Nangarhar Province. The outbreak was investigated by the DEWS team. There were 6 suspected cases> Laboratory specimens of the 6 suspected cases were collected and laboratory results reported negative for vibrio cholera.

Special activity

- On 21 September 2008, the International Peace Day was celebrated in Afghanistan. The World Health Organization joined the international community and the Afghans around the country in the celebration. WHO in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health and UNICEF launched a polio vaccination campaign between 21-23 September 2008 in which some 14,000 volunteers vaccinated around 1.8 million children under age 5.

In 2008, WHO's emergency preparedness and humanitarian activities are funded by its regular budget and grant from the United Nation's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the USAID fund for the rehabilitation of Afghanistan's health system.



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| WHO Representative in Afghanistan | : | Mr Peter Graaff |
| EHA Technical Officer | : | Dr Taqdeer Asadullah |
| Report's focal point | : | Mrs Christina Banluta <i>Communications & Advocacy Officer</i> |
| Duty station | : | Afghanistan |
| Reporting period | : | 6 – 12 September 2008 |

