There have been unconfirmed reports of the presence of chikungunya virus in Karachi, Sindh, especially in areas of Malir.

The Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Department of Health of Sindh Province and World Health Organization (WHO) in Pakistan are working closely in the wake of these unconfirmed reports and carrying out epidemiological investigations. However, while the investigations continue, it can be clarified that no cases of chikungunya virus have yet been confirmed till date and any information circulating with regard to confirmation of any case is incorrect and misleading.

It is of paramount importance that the public and health care providers are adequately informed about the risk associated with all illnesses of epidemic potential. In the case of chikungunya, the following information must be conveyed:

- 1) Although there is serological evidence of the historical presence of the virus in Pakistan, there is at this time no evidence of any nested transmission of chikungunya in the country.
- 2) As for any disease, imported cases can always appear, but such importation, if detected early, would not cause any significant damage to public health.
- 3) The chikungunya virus pertains to the same family of viruses (the so-called "arboviruses") family, as dengue and Zika, but is known among the three for causing the least harm to health.
- 4) Being transmitted by the same mosquito (Aedes aegypti) as dengue, the measures already in place for controlling dengue are identical to the ones that are needed to control any surge in chikungunya transmission.
- 5) Epidemiological investigation supported by laboratory confirmation is being undertaken by the health authorities.

It is important to remember that an external evaluation mission of experts mandated by the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean has concluded in a recently released report, that Pakistan, at both federal and provincial levels, is well prepared to respond to any epidemic event. The assessment was conducted in all provinces and technically reviewed the 19 areas of capacities required by the International Health Regulations 2005 (IHR). Pakistan is thus in conformity with IHR requirements.

In the particular case of chikungunya, the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination and WHO Pakistan wish to highlight that diagnostic capacities exist within the National Institute of Health and additional testing supplies will be made available to absorb any further testing demand.

In conclusion, this statement is intended to convey accurate information on the current situation with regard to chikungunya virus in Pakistan.

More advisory and technical information on the chikungunya virus and related individual and collective measures is available at:

Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination

Chikungunya fact sheet

Chikungunya health advisory

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