

Current Health Event

“Small bite, big threat”

In collaboration with Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), Lebanon, the WHO Country Office celebrates today the World Health Day (WHD). The theme for 2014 is “Vector-borne diseases” and the slogan is: “Small bite, big threat”.

Editorial note:

World Health Day (WHD) is celebrated on 7 April every year to mark the anniversary of the founding of the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1948. Each year a theme is selected that highlights a priority area of public health. The Day provides an opportunity for individuals in every community to get involved in activities that can lead to better health.

Every year over 1 million people all around the world die due to vector borne diseases. Within the past two decades, many important vector-borne diseases have also re-emerged or spread to new parts of the world. Environmental changes, massive increase in international travel and trade, changes in agricultural practices and rapid unplanned urbanization are causing an increase in the number and spread of many vectors worldwide and making new groups of people, notably tourists and business travellers, vulnerable.

“A global health agenda that gives higher priority to vector control could save many lives and avert much suffering. Simple, cost-effective interventions like insecticide-treated bed nets and indoor spraying have already saved millions of lives,” says Dr Margaret Chan, WHO Director-General.

Dr Margaret Chan, WHO Director-General:

“No one in the 21st century should die from the bite of a mosquito, a sandfly, a blackfly or a tick.”

Vectors are small organisms that carry diseases and spread them from person to person and place to place. They can put our health at risk, at home and when we travel. For example, malaria, dengue and leishmaniasis are all transmitted by vectors.

On the occasion of WHD, WHO, Lebanon, in collaboration with the Lebanese University is launching a one-year project on mapping vectors of diseases in Lebanon. The project will start with mapping the distribution of *Aedes albopictus* in Lebanon. Traps for adult stages will be put in several localities in order to cover different geographic zones over Lebanon. The weekly field data will be used to produce a detailed atlas of the vectors showing the daily and seasonal dynamic activity of the mosquitoes. In addition susceptibility of the mosquito to the most commonly used insecticide for control programs will be performed.

Dr Ala Alwan, Regional Director, WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region:

“Let us make this World Health Day a day to scale up efforts to control the very big threat caused by a small bite.”



WHO cannot work on this goal alone. Partnerships with governments, development partners, industry and NGOs, communities and individuals are vital to achieve such a goal.

Cumulative Notifiable diseases in Lebanon (Syrian)

Disease	2013 Cumul	2014 Cumul*	Feb	Mar
Vaccine Preventable Diseases				
Polio	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Acute Flaccid Paralysis	34(7)	8(4)	2(0)	3(2)
Measles	1760 (232)	95(32)	42 (15)	30(6)
Mumps	14(2)	12(7)	5(4)	5(2)
Pertussis	59(9)	19(6)	11(5)	0(0)
Rabies	1(1)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Rubella	27(1)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Tetanus	4(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Viral Hep B	141(8)	36(3)	16(2)	6(1)
Water/Food Borne Diseases				
Brucellosis	189(12)	23(0)	8(0)	5(0)
Hydatid cyst	13(3)	4(0)	2(0)	0(0)
Typhoid Fever	407(21)	35(0)	19(0)	7(0)
Viral Hep A	1551 (220)	363 (54)	141 (22)	74(7)
Other Diseases				
Leishmaniasis	1033 (1032)	219 (216)	62 (62)	46 (46)
Meningitis	204(24)	37(4)	19(1)	5(1)
Viral Hep C	103(4)	19(0)	9(0)	3(0)

Source: Ministry of Public Health, Lebanon .
Cumul = Cumulative. *to date