

Department of Disease Control

Weekly Disease Forecast No. 123_Melioidosis (28 Aug. – 3 Sep. 2017)

During 1 January to 22 August 2017, the national disease surveillance system revealed 1,978 melioidosis cases with 21 deaths. The disease is mostly found in the Northeastern region during the rainy season with a peak in August.

From the close monitoring of the disease situation, the number of melioidosis patients and deaths from May this year is higher compared to the previous years. The occurrence is also on an increasing trend especially in the Northeastern and the Southern regions where there are more deaths caused by the disease.



According to this week disease forecast, the occurrence of melioidosis is likely to continue during this rainy season with heavy rains and floods in some areas.

Melioidosis is an infectious disease caused by the bacterium *Burkholderia pseudomallei* found in muddy soil and surface water. The most common mode of infection is percutaneous through inoculation of the bacteria into skin wound or water soaked skin. Other less frequent modes are ingestion of contaminated food or water and inhalation. Symptoms include fever, skin ulcers or pustules. Some cases have multifocal infection with abscesses in many organs, i.e. lung, liver, and spleen with septicemia. Some patients develop chronic illness mimicking many other diseases including tuberculosis. Those with underlying diseases, e.g. diabetes, harmful alcohol consumption, chronic lung disease, renal disease and patients under steroid therapy, are at risk of the disease, severe illness and fatalities.

The Department of Disease Control encourages all people in endemic areas to wear rubber boots and gloves when wading or working in muddy soil and surface water and take showers immediately after risky exposure. All should also avoid unsafe drinking water and semi-cooked meat. Patients with fever lasting more than 5 days in spite of antipyretics, chronic ulcers or multiple pustules must seek a medical treatment immediately.

For queries and information, please call DDC hotline 1224.



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