

# REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

November 16 - 22, 2023

## WEEKLY EVENTS

- On November 19, 2023, the Department of Disease Control and related agencies participated in health screening and disease prevention and control activities in the migrant worker community in the Nong Khaem district of Bangkok. These activities included blood pressure checks, body mass index assessments, screening for tuberculosis using mobile digital X-ray systems, and administering vaccines for influenza and COVID-19 to a total of 56 migrant workers. An innovative biometric identity verification technology was utilized for patient registration. This involves the use of iris scanning and facial recognition to register individuals, track health outcomes, and can be used for follow-up. This technology is useful in disease surveillance, prevention, and control and health care for migrant workers who work in Thailand and to increased health service efficiency for better health and safety in the community.
- Blue Dot Alert reported on the operational activities of the local health agencies in the village of Peshawar, located in the western part of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. In October 2023, samples were collected from patients exhibiting symptoms such as fever, headache, muscle pain, and weakness. A total of 5 samples were sent for testing to the laboratory at the National Institute of Health (NIH) in Islamabad. The test results, dated October 23, revealed that out of all the samples, one confirmed case of West Nile virus was identified in an 80-year-old female patient who has since passed away.

## EXTRA CAUTION OF **RESPIRATORY DISEASES** AMONG YOUNG CHILDREN AND THE ELDERLY

On November 21, 2023, the Blue Dot Alert System compiled local media reports that indicate a large number of pediatric patients with respiratory symptoms are seeking treatment at hospitals in Beijing, China. Their symptoms include high fever, cough, runny nose, and there are some cases of pneumonia. Several schools have suspended classes. The data shows a significant increase in respiratory tract infections in Beijing since the beginning of 2023. This surge is speculated to be related to the relaxation of COVID-19 control measures.

The predominant respiratory illness observed in many countries, including Thailand, is Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV). In the United States, there are approximately 80,000 RSV cases in children annually and approximately 160,000 cases in individuals aged 65 and above. In Thailand, surveillance data from January to August 2023 revealed 5,411 suspected samples tested, with 732 positives for RSV (13%). The highest incidence is in children under 2 years old (52%), followed by the 3-5 years age group (34%) and the 6-15 years age group (8%). There were a few cases in individuals aged 60 and above (2%). Most pediatric cases likely result from contact within schools or childcare centers.

Of particular concern is the potential for lower respiratory tract infections reaching the bronchi or lungs, which can lead to pneumonia. Older adults aged 65 and above, as well as individuals with chronic conditions like diabetes, lung disease, heart disease, or compromised immune systems, are at a higher risk of severe outcomes, including death. Adhering to COVID-19 prevention measures remains crucial to reducing the risk and spread of such respiratory diseases.



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Health agencies should work with local authorities to prevent and control RSV outbreaks. Information should be disseminated to parents, teachers, and childcare providers to raise awareness of the symptoms, modes of transmission, and how to recognize early signs, especially in children under 5 years old. The community is advised to follow proper hygiene practices, such as thorough handwashing with soap and water, particularly before meals and after using the restroom. Avoiding crowded places is recommended, and if necessary, wearing masks is advised. Regular cleaning of homes and children's toys is emphasized.

Parents and teachers in educational institutions are urged to monitor for symptoms. If a sick child is identified, they should be separated from healthy children, and learning activities should be temporarily suspended. Additionally, elderly individuals should be kept away from sick children as they are more susceptible to complications. If someone exhibits symptoms consistent with RSV, it is advised to consult a physician for proper diagnosis and treatment.

## INFORMATION COLLECTED AND ANALYZED BY

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## Sources

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