REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

August 15 - 21, 2024

WEEKLY EVENTS

- According to the Week 33 Event Surveillance Report (August 12-18, 2024), two measles outbreaks were reported. The first incident involved two male patients, aged 15 and 17, from Malaysia, in Trang province. They had traveled to Thailand to participate in a sports competition at the Thailand Sports School from August 20-29. Both exhibited symptoms consistent with measles. The first patient was treated at Trang Provincial Hospital, while the second had no treatment history in Thailand. Laboratory tests confirmed that both cases were measles. The investigation is currently ongoing. The second incident involved a cluster of 20 patients in the provinces of Yala, Narathiwat, and Pattani. Among these, 20 suspected cases were identified, with 12 of them confirmed as measles.

- According to the ASEAN Biodiaspora Virtual Center, from August 15-16, 2024, Sri Lanka has taken measures to reduce the risk of rabies since 2022. Relevant agencies vaccinated 1 million dogs against rabies and spayed 40,000 female dogs. Additionally, rabies vaccines were provided to 300 hospitals across the country free of charge for the public. However, in 2024, there have been 11 deaths due to rabies, which were caused by not receiving rabies vaccination after exposure. Meanwhile, Indonesia has reported a malaria outbreak in the South Nias district of South Sumatra. From January to July 2024, there were 562 cases of malaria and 8 deaths, distributed across 7 sub-districts. The local authorities in the affected area have declared a 14-day emergency response, which will last until August 23, 2024.

MPOX CASES HAVE BEEN FOUND IN SEVERAL COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THAILAND

The Ministry of Public Health is closely monitoring the ongoing mpox outbreak in several countries. On August 14, 2024, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared mpox a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), marking the second such declaration in two years. In August, several countries and regions have reported cases of mpox. Sweden reported one case in a traveler returning from a country in the Persian Gulf, Pakistan reported three cases, all recently returning from the United Arab Emirates, and the Philippines reported its first domestic case with no travel history. Taiwan reported four cases.

On August 22, 2024, the Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health, reported the first confirmed case of mpox Clade 1b in Thailand. The patient, a 66-year-old European man, returned from Africa, a high-risk region for the outbreak, and showed symptoms consistent with mpox, leading to hospitalization. Of the 43 close contacts of this patient, none have shown abnormal symptoms so far, but the Department of Disease Control continues to monitor their health for 21 days. If anyone exhibits symptoms like fever, rash, or swollen lymph nodes, they must be immediately admitted to a hospital for examination and treatment.

Currently, Thailand has implemented screening measures for travelers from 42 countries identified as yellow fever risk zones. Travelers from these countries must register through the Thai Health Pass system and undergo screening by international disease control officers. This screening includes temperature checks, symptom inquiries, and skin rash observation. If symptoms consistent with mpox are detected, the traveler will be isolated, undergo a medical history interview, further examination, and laboratory testing, and then be transferred for treatment at Bamrasnaradura Infectious Diseases Institute.

The Ministry of Public Health has strengthened screening and quarantine measures for travelers from yellow fever zones and Mpox outbreak areas. Travelers from these 42 countries must pre-register with the Thai Health Pass before checking in with their airline at the departure country. The international disease control and quarantine division is prepared for wider outbreaks, with a four-story quarantine building containing 60 rooms available, and group quarantine facilities for families if needed. The Ministry of Public Health assures the public of the effectiveness of these disease prevention measures.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Officials should inform village health volunteers about the resurgence of the mpox outbreak in Africa and its spread to other countries mentioned earlier, as well as the detection of the first suspected case of mpox in Thailand. They should coordinate with public health officials to educate the community on the causes, transmission, symptoms, and appropriate preventive measures to reduce risk. The Department of Disease Control is actively monitoring and tracking the situation of mpox and other emerging or re-emerging diseases.

There is a possibility of encountering travelers who may exhibit symptoms of the disease. Therefore, the importance of preventing mpox should be emphasized, including avoiding crowded or congested places, avoiding close contact, regularly cleaning shared surface areas, frequently washing hands with soap or alcohol-based hand sanitizer, and not sharing personal items with others. Individuals with suspected symptoms can get tested at any nearby healthcare facility.

INFORMATION COLLECTED AND ANALYZED BY

Sources

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