

World Health Day 2014: Preventing Vector-borne Diseases

“Small Bite, Big Threat”

World Health Day is on the 7th of April each year. This day marks the anniversary of the World Health Organization which was founded in 1948. WHO is the leading global health authority and the work is summarized through their 6 point agenda. *Promote Development, Fosters Health Security, Strengthens Health Systems, Harnesses information, research and evidence, Enhances Partnerships, Improves Performance.*

WHO use the anniversary of the founding day not only as an opportunity to celebrate the organization and its work but also as an opportunity to highlight a current global health priority. For each World Health Day, WHO designates a health challenge or theme. This year theme is **“Preventing Vector - borne diseases”**.

More than half the world’s population is at risk from diseases such as malaria, dengue, leishmaniasis, Lyme disease, schistosomiasis, and yellow fever, carried by mosquitoes, flies, ticks, water snails and other vectors. Every year, more than one billion people are infected and more than one million die from vector-borne diseases.

This World Health Day – 7 April – WHO is highlighting the serious and increasing threat of vector-borne diseases, with the slogan **“Small bite, big threat”**.

The Organization also emphasizes that these diseases are entirely preventable. Newly published “A global brief on vector-borne diseases” outlines steps that governments, community groups and families can all take to protect people from infection.

Schistosomiasis, transmitted by water snails, is the most widespread of all vector-borne diseases, affecting almost 240 million people worldwide. Children living and playing near infested water are particularly vulnerable to this disease which causes anaemia and a reduced ability to learn. Schistosomiasis can be controlled through regular mass treatment of at-risk groups with a safe, effective medicine, as well as improving access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

Within the past two decades, many important vector-borne diseases have also re-emerged or spread to new parts of the world. Environmental changes, a 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.

Mosquito-borne dengue, for example, is now found in 100 countries, putting more than 2.5 billion people - over 40% of the world’s population - at risk. Dengue has recently been reported in China, Portugal and the state of Florida, in the United States of America.

Reports from Greece say that malaria has returned there for the first time in 40 years. This highlights the continual threat of reintroduction and the need for continued vigilance to ensure that any malaria resurgence can be rapidly contained.

On World Health Day 2014, WHO is calling for a renewed focus on vector control and better provision of safe water, sanitation and hygiene – key strategies outlined in WHO’s 2011 Roadmap for the control, elimination and eradication of neglected tropical diseases, which sets targets for the period 2012–2020.

The job and responsibility of a physiatrist is two fold, firstly as a primary physician to prevent the disease occurrence and secondly as a specialist to treat the victims for their disability and proper rehabilitation in the society.

Last but not the least, the Editorial Board proudly and delightfully announces the celebration of 25th birth day of our beloved IJPMR, and observing year 2014 as Silver Jubilee year of publication. The present Editorial Board also acknowledges the contribution of past Editorial Boards and strongly believes that new look IJPMR will be able to fulfil the expectation of the members and readers.