

SHORT REPORT

**Assessing of existing Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials on Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever**

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In DHF control measures, health education and community participation are emphasized for source reduction of mosquito breeding, appropriate educational material on mosquito breeding sites and methods of source reduction would be needed [1]. Main control activity in Myanmar is larva control by water changing and water emptying campaign of mass movement routinely, and removal of discarded tin and coconut shells. Roof gutters were also the possible breeding habitat of *Aedes* in Singapore [2]. Information, education and communication (IEC) programme for control activity and awareness to seek treatment at Government Health Institution is also conducted by using mass media, e.g. radio talk, television spots, etc [3]. IEC materials regarding DHF have been developed in Myanmar for many years. Health messages were spread through various media, such as radio, television, newspapers and local journals. However, printed media regarding DHF is not sufficiently distributed. Pamphlets were developed locally in States and Divisions. Social mobilization plays an important role for sustaining of larva control activities in the community aiming at promoting the coordination, collaboration and cooperation between concerned departments, NGOs and community involvement [4]. A qualitative study was conducted in Thaketa Township, DHF hyperendemic area in Yangon Division. General objective was to develop the draft of IEC materials (pamphlets, radio,

television, newspapers, and journals). Specific objectives were to find out the recommendation of existing IEC materials, to pretest the draft and to assess the social mobilization process of midwives in the community. Ten Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted among basic health staff, general practitioners, NGOs and volunteers.

The findings consisted of three components.

- (i) FGD on recommendation of existing IEC materials.
- (ii) Pretesting of draft on pamphlets, television spot, radio talk, newspapers and journals.
- (iii) FGD on social mobilization in the community.

(i) *FGD on recommendation of existing IEC*

The followings were the suggestions made by the majority of participants.

*Pamphlets* should be illustrated in cartoon with short and clear messages. These should be well distributed among the community especially in schools. Same message (6 inches x 4 inches size) could be used in *newspapers* and *journals* once a week before and during rainy season. Health magazines and astrology magazines were the most preferable media. Page number 2 or 3 was the most conspicuous position. The information should be telecast between 7 pm to 8 pm within soap opera hours, twice a week during rainy season. It

would be better in presenting three spots: cause, signs and symptoms, preventive and control measures. The suitable time for 10-minute *radio* talk was between 5 pm to 6 pm. Interview of the mother by DHF project manager and paediatrician was very exciting and should be included in *television* as well as *radio* programme. Among the mentioned IEC materials, preventive and control measures were found to be the most interesting facts by the community. Regular clearing of the gutter should be mentioned in health message as well as in the book "Facts for life". The fact that "DHF may attack second time in previously infected child" was important to remind the mothers. Cartoon and art competition and exhibition on DHF would be the most effective media for school children and mothers.

(ii) *Pretesting of draft on pamphlets, television spot, message for radio talk, newspapers and journals*

It was done and some points were transformed according to the comments of the participants. The respondents demand for further improvement of existing IEC according to FGD findings. It needs to improve the style, way of presenting messages, consistency, preferred time and competitions. The existing print media should be reviewed and revised by the efforts of Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (VBDC) and Health Education Bureau.

(iii) *FGD on social mobilization in the community*

There's a great need of sustainability of larva control activities through community involvement. Midwives were the key persons coordinating with the ward authorities, Maternal and Child Welfare Association (MCWA) members and other NGOs. They usually follow the instruction of Township Medical Officer (TMO) for DHF health education and demonstrating larva control activities, integrating with

immunization. They made contact with the Ward authorities one day prior to the field visit. Emergency household visit was provided by the respective midwife when a suspected DHF case was observed in the ward. The relevant points were note taken in the diary and reported weekly to Division Health Office and Township Law and Order Restoration Council through checklist. They suggested to organize a health committee in each ward for effective motivation in their society. Larva control measures must be regularly done not only in the households but also in the schools and monastery. It is necessary to change the wrong belief that polluted water is a breeding source of *Aedes aegypti*. They also pointed out that rules and regulations were also needed for sustainability of larva control activities. Midwives and volunteers performed larva control measures in the households where the household members did not regularly do.

In Myanmar, roof gutters were not well known breeding sites among the public. These should be added to the existing IEC materials. Moreover, further entomology studies related to roof gutters should be carried out in the places where main water supply was pipe water. The reason was that roof gutters were regularly cleared in the houses where rainwater was mainly used during the rainy season. IEC materials should clearly focus on behavioural messages for source reduction. Qualitative studies to assess acceptability of IEC materials and barriers to community use should be continued.

## REFERENCES

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