On Friday, December 7, 2018, the Palau Ministry of Health alerted the public of an outbreak of dengue fever following the first ever laboratory confirmation of two cases with dengue serotype 3. This poses a significant concern for public health as the whole population is potentially vulnerable to infection.

In response to the outbreak, the Ministry of Health activated its emergency response team on December 7, 2018. The team has been tasked with raising community awareness of the outbreak and dengue prevention measures, conducting disease surveillance and reporting, strengthening environmental control measures, and ensuring adequate resources are available to combat the outbreak.

Between August 26 – September 1, 2019, there were 26 new cases reported. This brings the total from December 1, 2018 - September 1, 2019 to 570 cases. There have been two deaths attributed to dengue infection during this outbreak.

Demographics

Age range = 0 – 88 years
Mean age = 29 years
Median age = 25 years

The majority of cases during this outbreak have been Palauan.

Ethnicity Count %
Palauan 490 86%
Bangladeshi 30 5%
Filipino 21 4%
Chinese 11 2%
Other 16 3%
TOTAL 570 100%

Symptom Profile of Cases

# of Cases with Each Symptom (Cases with available data = 323 )

Fever
Chills
Headache
Body pain
Joint pain
Loss of appetite
Altered taste sensation
Nausea
Vomiting
Cough
Eye pain
Abdominal pain
Rash

Outbreak Overview

Epi Week 35: August 26 – September 1, 2019

Cases by State and Koror Hamlets

Cases by State from: 8/26/2019 – 9/1/2019, n= 26

Koror
Ari
Madad
Ngerchee
Ngats
Argchee
Iyebukel

# of Cases

Fever
Chills
Headache
Body pain
Joint pain
Loss of appetite
Altered taste sensation
Nausea
Vomiting
Cough
Eye pain
Abdominal pain
Rash

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Epi Curve

Dengue Cases by Week of Diagnosis

December 3, 2019 - September 1, 2019

Lab Testing

• The Belau National Hospital (BNH) Laboratory, four major community health centers throughout the island, and laboratories from three private clinics have the capacity to test symptomatic patients for dengue via a rapid diagnostic test kit, SD Bioline Dengue Duo (Dengue NS1 Ag + IgG/IgM) by Abbott.

• The BNH Lab continues to send a sample of serum specimens to the Hawaii State Laboratory (HSL) for confirmation and serotyping for monitoring.

• There have been 160 serotyped cases of DENV-3. The last recorded cases of DENV-2 in Palau were from November of 2018.

Response Measures

There was a slight decrease in the number of cases reported in August compared to July. Although the majority of cases in August were residents of Koror state, there were a considerable number of cases from outlying states including Airai, Melekeok, Ngatping and Ngaraard. There have been cases reported in 13 out of 16 states. Two deaths due to dengue have occurred during this outbreak.

The Ministry of Health Dengue Response Team is focusing its efforts on increasing community participation in clean-up activities through partnership with state governments and other community organizations. Various activities during Preparedness Month will feature the 35 dengue prevention message. This year the Preparedness Parade and Fair will include a dengue prevention float and boat.

The Team continues to provide updates on the dengue outbreak to the community through a weekly radio spot at the national radio station, dissemination of print material about dengue prevention to the community and development of dengue prevention materials aimed at young residents.

The Communicable Disease Unit and the DEH Vector Control Program continue to investigate all reported cases of dengue fever and implement vector control measures.

The Palau Ministry of Health’s community dengue prevention 35 message:

• Search and eliminate mosquito breeding sites.
• Self-protect by wearing insect repellent and ensuring a mosquito-free environment.
• Seek early consultation if you show severe signs or symptoms of dengue.

The next report for epi week 36 will be released on Tuesday, September 10, 2019.