Outbreak Overview

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. A year after the declaration, the Ministry of Health continues to urge the public to practice prevention to slow the spread of DENV-3. Over 700 cases of dengue have been recorded between December 3, 2018 and December 17, 2019, including 266 serotyped cases of DENV-3. No cases of other serotypes have been identified since the start of the current outbreak.

During the past week (January 20 - 26, 2020) there were five (5) new cases reported. This brings the total number of cases for the month of January 2020 to 35 and from December 1, 2018 – January 26, 2020 to 802 cases.

There have been two deaths officially attributed to dengue infection during this outbreak.

Case Summary State and Hamlet

Map of dengue cases by state, between October 1, 2019 – January 26, 2020

Demographics

Age range = 0 – 88 years
Mean age = 29 years
Median age = 24 years

The majority of cases during this outbreak have been Palauan.

Ethnicity Count %
Palauan 674 84%
Bangladeshi 47 6%
Filipino 27 3%
Chinese 22 3%
Other 32 4%
TOTAL 802

Symptom Profile of Cases and Hospitalization

Most common symptoms reported among dengue fever cases are fever, chills, headache, body pain, joint pain and loss of appetite, typical of dengue infection.

Response

The Ministry of Health Dengue Response Team continues to promote efforts to increase community involvement in mosquito source reduction activities through partnerships with state governments and community partners. Targeted interventions are being planned for areas with high burden of disease during the current operational period. These include a dengue prevention and awareness campaign that is suited for school-age children who continue to comprise the largest proportion of dengue cases. Bureau of Public Health staff conducted a school outreach to Meyuns Elementary School as dengue infection and absences among students was disrupting school exam schedules. Students were taught a short contemporary Palauan song and dance that reinforces the 3S message.

The Team continues to provide updates on the dengue outbreak to the public through a weekly radio spot at the national radio station and dissemination of print material about dengue prevention to the greater community.

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 promotes the dengue 3S messages:

- 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 5 will be released on Tuesday, February 4, 2020.