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The threat of Chikungunya virus to Pakistan

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Core tip

Chikungunya is a viral disease and like many other viral borne diseases such as dengue, yellow fever it is transmitted via mosquitoes. Having mostly been seen in Asia and Africa, this viral borne illness has recently spread to Europe and America.

Chikungunya is a viral disease and like many other viral borne diseases such as dengue, yellow fever it is transmitted via mosquitoes. Having mostly been seen in Asia and Africa, this viral borne illness has recently spread to Europe and America (1).

The main symptoms include fever, headache, nausea, muscle and joint pain that could be very severe (1).

Symptoms can be very like to the ones seen in Zika virus infection or with dengue fever (2).

The word “Chikungunya” refers to the stooped appearance of these patients due to their arthralgia (1).

The main mosquito species involving in its transmission are *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* (1).

Recently, in September 2016, India saw a surge in the outbreak of Chikungunya virus, with over 1000 cases being seen in its capital city (3). Experts warn that Pakistan due to being its neighboring country could face a similar situation. Up till now, no cases have been reported in Pakistan (4). However, the government should keep a vigilant eye for travelers coming from across the border and abroad as carriers of the virus in order to end up spreading the virus (4).

The rise in the proportion of cases in Delhi, India's capital, was mainly due to the various construction sites around the city along with above average rainfall this season, which ended up leaving stagnant water all around the city, a breeding site for these mosquitoes (3).

Currently no antiviral therapy is available for its cure and the patients are managed symptomatically (5).

The health department along with the

government of Pakistan should take concrete steps in tackling this virus. All efforts should be made to avoid the accumulation of stagnant water around the cities. Citizens should be advised to wear full sleeves clothing, use insect repellents and villagers should avoid sleeping outdoors without a mosquito net. Otherwise an epidemic of this virus could affect Pakistan badly and end up taking lives.

Authors' contribution

All authors contributed equally to the work.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Ethical considerations

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