7-11-1991

Update On Cholera Outbreak; Pan-american Health Organization (paho) Proposes Long-term Prevention Program

Barbara Khol

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/notisur

Recommended Citation

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Latin America Digital Beat (LADB) at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in NotiSur by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu.
Update On Cholera Outbreak; Pan-American Health Organization (paho) Proposes Long-term Prevention Program

by Barbara Khol

Category/Department: General
Published: Thursday, July 11, 1991

June 24: The Mexican Health Secretariat confirmed 17 cholera cases in the village of San Miguel Totolmalaya, state of Mexico. June 25: In a telephone interview with the Associated Press, Peruvian Health Ministry spokesperson Juan Garcia said the death toll was 2,143 of 221,423 reported cases of cholera in Peru. According to Garcia, the epidemic has been brought under control in the highlands and along Peru's the coast, Garcia. In Ecuador, 372 of a registered 20,000 cases have died since March. Media reports indicated at least 106 new cases in Guayaquil. The city accounts for about 60% of Ecuador's cholera cases. June 26: In Colombia's Choco department, located on the Pacific coast, 24 persons have died of cholera. July 1: The Jornal do Brasil reported two new cases of cholera in the small town of Benjamin Constant, located in the Amazon region near the Peruvian and Colombian borders. The patients were treated and released from a military hospital in the nearby town of Tabatinga. Health Ministry statistics show 18 Brazilians have contracted cholera since early April. No deaths have been reported. July 6: According to a report by the Colombian government's National Health Institute, a nurse infected with cholera became the first confirmed case in Bogota. For the nation as a whole, 2,500 cases have been confirmed, and the death toll totals 53. July 8: In Miami, the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) sponsored a conference titled, "Una Respuesta Global al Colera con la Colaboracion Norte-Sur." Participants included physicians and public health experts, and representatives of health ministries from the US and Latin America. PAHO director Carlyle Guerra told participants that at least 250,000 persons have been infected by cholera since January, and 2,300 have died. According to Guerra, the absence of a hemispheric prevention plan may lead to a cholera case count of 10 million, and the deaths of another 10,000 Latin Americans, particularly in low-income communities. Carlyle said, "Cholera represents a very serious threat to the region, but...it is only a symptom of widespread conditions of poverty, marginalization, and lack of public, health and sanitation services." According to PAHO, for every confirmed/recorded case of cholera, another 20 possible cases exist. PAHO has proposed a $610.5 million budget for an initial three-year emergency phase to cope with the region's medical response to cholera. The second portion of the proposal consists of expansion and upgrade of health and sanitation services at a cost of over $200 billion. Special support from the US and multilateral financial institutions is requested in the development of "debt-health swaps." PAHO has emphasized that living conditions for a large proportion of the Latin American and Caribbean population make the emergence and spread of cholera possible, if not inevitable. Statistics presented at the 2nd regional conference on poverty, which took place last November in Quito, Ecuador, indicated that 270 million Latin Americans (62% of the total population) live in poverty. UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) statistics show that 89.2 million residents of the region lack potable water, and 141.1 million, access to sewer systems. Treatment of waste water occurs in only 5 to 10% of existing sewer systems in Latin America and the Caribbean. According to ECLAC, the proportion of waste water treatment has remained effectively the same since 1960. In 1980, South America pumped 127 cubic meters

©2011 The University of New Mexico, Latin American & Iberian Institute. All rights reserved.
per second of waste water into the ocean, rivers and lakes. As of July 9, cholera cases had been confirmed in Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Chile, Brazil and Mexico. (Basic data from AP, 06/25/91, 07/01/91; AFP, 07/06/91; Notimex, 06/26/91, 07/08/91, 07/09/91; Xinhua, 07/09/91)

-- End --