

DENGUE FEVER IN PAKISTAN: A NIGHTMARE

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Dengue fever (DF) is a leading public health problem today in Pakistan. It is a viral disease transmitted by a mosquito vector. It can end-up in serious complications like, Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever (DHF) and Dengue Shock Syndrome (DSS) with quite a high mortality. Its increasing spread is a matter of concern for many countries.^{1,2} These are some of the echoes of information provided through the electronic and print media.

Why is it spreading so fast? the two main reasons are the rapid migration of people from one part of the world to another and the poor sanitation which provides chances of proliferation to the vector mosquito. International travels for various reasons may be an important reason.³

When we were medical students, Professor T.B. Oppal while teaching Microbiology told that vector for dengue virus was there in Pakistan, if the virus got entered in our country, it will be difficult to eradicate it. Today after almost four decades, we are seeing that scenario true. The global transit has made it possible for the virus to spread, and every year we come across a situation worse than the previous. According to a WHO report, the cases and deaths due to DF are on increase in Pakistan with a sharp rise in 2011-2013.⁴

We published an editorial in the same journal in 2011, highlighting the problem with a title "Wake-up: Dengue epidemic is at the door step."³ In that editorial it was stressed that Health Department and the community has to share the responsibility to take preventive measures to halt this ever increasing problem. The editorial tried to wake-up the sleeping health authorities but no effective measures were taken to prevent dengue from spread until in 2013 we got an

epidemic in Swat district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province along with sporadic cases in Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan provinces.⁵

Today we are writing another editorial having similar title with the hope for the better listening. It is suggested that the Health Departments both at Federal and Provincial level should work together, and adopt preventive measures to avoid the future epidemics of DF. Of course, the WHO has to help and guide and we believe that our departments may not wake-up without the WHO intervention, even with repeated natural warnings.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Authors declare no conflict of interest.

GRANT SUPPORT AND FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE
None declared.

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