

Weather, Peoples Behaviour, Among Causes Of Rising Number Of Dengue Cases

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KUALA LUMPUR, March 14 (Bernama) -- The hot and rainy weather throughout the year which facilitates mosquito breeding sites, and peoples' indifference to cleanliness, are among the main causes for the continuous rise of dengue cases in the country.

Two medical experts interviewed by Bernama recently acknowledged that the epidemic seems never-ending, with the number of cases often increasing, and occasionally reducing.

Dr Mohd Shamsul Amri Ismail, a medical specialist from the KPJ Specialist Hospital in Damansara described dengue as an 'urban disease' and that it will always exist in the country because there were many mosquito breeding sites, especially in big cities.

He said that with the increase in the number of development projects, there was no doubt that breeding grounds for mosquitoes would exist at the construction sites.

"But, if you want to blame construction, every year there is construction. Only when there is evidence that a site has breeding areas, the government should do something like fine them or stop the construction," he said.

Construction sites had been earlier reported to be the main factor contributing towards mosquito breeding, particularly in districts which recorded a high number of dengue cases.

When asked about the weather which was also a source for dengue cases, Dr Mohd Shamsul Amri said it is something that can not be avoided.

"The climate is something we cannot do anything about because we are situated in the tropical region. We experience hot and rainy weather throughout the year which increases the breeding of mosquitoes," he said.

He said the government was doing its best to address the threat of dengue in the country, including carrying out the 'Ops Gempur' operation at construction sites, outdoor residual spraying - which is a new spray technique in areas infested by aedes mosquitoes, and anti-mosquito wall paints.

"It is a good effort. I am sure the ministry (Health) has carried out studies before implementing any new approaches," he said.

Meanwhile, the Kuala Lumpur Hospital's General Medicine and Infectious Diseases consultant Dr Leong Chee Loon said a part of the society wasn't concerned about the cleanliness of their surroundings.

"They do not care about cleanliness. Although fogging is done, after a day it (water) will stagnate again. Perhaps for this reason the spread of dengue continues," he said.

He said the habit of disregarding cleanliness should be changed so that the threat of dengue in the country could be decreased.

"We need to jointly safeguard the environment, by eliminating places which store water and avoid leaving around rubbish which collect water. Also instal screens during sleep," he said.

Dr Leong said signs informing that an area experienced death due to dengue will be placed whenever a death occurred to bring awareness to the community, so that they take this problem seriously.

According to the director-general of Health Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah, 74 deaths due to dengue fever had been recorded throughout the country from January until March 7, compared to only 36 deaths recorded in the same period last year.

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