



EDİTÖRE MEKTUP / LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Declining global trends of cholera: areas to strengthen and the way forward

Azalan küresel kolera eğilimleri: güçlendirilecek alanlar ve ileriye dönük alınacak yol

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To the Editor,

Cholera has been regarded as one of the major public health concerns of infectious origin in the low- and middle-income nations^{1,2}. The disease remains highly fatal in the absence of the provision of appropriate treatment. In-fact, the available global estimates suggest that on an average the disease infects 2.5 million people each year of which 0.14 million people succumb to death due to the unavailability of treatment services^{1,2}. It is important to acknowledge that the disease predominantly affects poorest and most susceptible individuals and that each and every death attributed to cholera is preventable considering the tools which we are having at present¹.

It is quite encouraging to know that a decline of almost 60% was reported in the incidence of the cases in the year 2018, with a significant reduction in the number of cases in the high endemic nations^{1,3}. The reported decline is an outcome of the sustained commitment of policy makers, efforts of the health workers, community engagement and organization of the mass vaccination campaigns against the disease³. In addition, most of the nation has drafted a framework and an action plan for the prevention and control of the disease, and this has contributed to the significant progress^{2,4}.

In order to expedite the gains accomplished, the global readers have formulated a roadmap for attaining the specified target (viz. minimize case-attributed deaths by 90% and elimination of transmission in 20 nations) by 2030 and it lays down

the plan to prevent and eventually eliminate the disease^{2,3}. The roadmap emphasizes attention towards 3 main areas, namely early detection and prompt response to the disease outbreaks, adoption of a multisectoral approach in high-risk locations in endemic nations, and devising a mechanism to foster technical assistance, mobilization of available resources & partnership at different levels^{1,5}. For ensuring early detection and supplement the same with prompt response, there is an immense need to have strategies for community engagement, creation of rapid response teams, and strengthening of surveillance - risk communication - laboratory facilities - health systems - logistics support^{1,3,5}.

The multi-sectoral approach will aid in the prevention of recurrence of the disease and it is a must in small areas with high incidence of cases either perennially or seasonally. This should essentially include sustainable improvement in the water, sanitation & hygiene (WASH) facilities, involvement of community leaders as change agents, capacity building of healthcare workers, inter-sectoral collaboration, mass usage of vaccines, etc³⁻⁵. However, it is important to remember that no gains could be sustainable unless it is supported by financial assistance and strengthening of the WASH facilities¹. In-fact, it has been estimated that for each dollar spent on the control of the disease, in return the communities will be getting four times return³.

In conclusion, despite the significant gains accomplished in the battle against the prevention and control of the disease, a lot needs to be done and this

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will essentially require a multisectoral and a concerted approach.

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