

FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the Ministry of Health (MOH)'s "Communicable Diseases Surveillance in Singapore 2014" Annual Report.

2014 was an eventful year for communicable diseases on both the global and local fronts.

On the global front, MOH faced the resurgence of infectious diseases such the Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Ebola Virus Disease (EVD). MERS was first reported to cause severe pneumonia in humans in September 2012. In 2014, the world saw a total of 945 laboratory-confirmed cases of MERS, including 349 deaths. Most cases were reported in Saudi Arabia. At the same time, an outbreak of EVD affected Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in West Africa. This was the biggest outbreak of EVD ever recorded and the first time the virus spread among urban populations. The outbreak has continued into 2015. As at 24 June 2015, 27,479 laboratory-confirmed cases have been reported globally with 11,222 deaths. The lessons from these incidents underscore the importance of maintaining vigilance and preparedness for new and emerging infectious diseases.

On the home front, dengue fever (DF)/dengue haemorrhagic fever (DHF) continued to pose a burden of communicable diseases in our community. Following the record dengue epidemic seen in 2013, the number of DF/DHF cases remained high in 2014, with 18,326 laboratory cases of DF/DHF reported. There were six deaths due to dengue in 2014. The main circulating serotype was DENV-1. Mosquito larval source reduction remains the mainstay of vector-borne disease control and this approach requires active community participation. Public health education continues to be coordinated by the National Environmental Agency (NEA) with support by MOH.

The incidence of tuberculosis (TB) among residents and long staying non-residents continued to decline from 37.6 in 2013 to 36.9 in 2014. Measures to strengthen case detection and treatment have been rolled out progressively to enhance the Singapore TB Elimination Programme (STEP) following a review in 2012, which addressed key challenges for TB control: delayed diagnosis of infectious TB cases and the non-compliance with the complete treatment regimen until a full cure.

The number of newly reported HIV cases in 2014 (456) was similar to the number reported in 2013 (454). MOH has added three clinics to the list of private clinics offering anonymous testing services, to enhance the accessibility to voluntary testing. Moving forward, MOH will be reviewing strategies to further encourage early voluntary testing. This is necessary as a substantial proportion of cases continue to be diagnosed with late stage disease.

This report is published from the compilation of epidemiological information on communicable diseases collated through our close working relationship with the community of health professionals and our partner agencies. We thank all healthcare professionals and our partner agencies for their unwavering support and dedication in combating and minimising the threats of communicable diseases, for the common goal of safeguarding public health.

I hope that you will find this report useful. I look forward to your continued support and cooperation in the national surveillance of communicable diseases.



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