Cholera prevention and control

Comprehensive and multidisciplinary approaches to tackle an ancient disease

⇒ Cholera: a public health priority

With an estimated 1.4 to 4.3 million cases\(^1\) per year worldwide, cholera remains a major public health issue. Although treatable, cholera still results in 28,000 to 142,000 deaths per year\(^1\) and can kill within only a few hours.

Cholera is both a matter of emergency in case of outbreaks and a matter of development when the disease is endemic in high-risk areas.

The most vulnerable populations are those residing in areas with low safe water and sanitation coverage and minimal healthcare infrastructure, including refugee camps, overcrowded peri-urban slums.

⇒ Outbreaks in 2013 worldwide

In 2013, 27 outbreaks were reported to WHO by 27 countries:
- 22 in Africa;
- 4 in the Americas;
- 1 in Asia;

⇒ Mandate

In 2011, the World Health Assembly adopted resolution WHA 64.15 Cholera: mechanism for control and prevention, recognizing the re-emergence of cholera as a significant public health burden and threat.

⇒ Tools to control and prevent cholera

The resolution called for the implementation of integrated and comprehensive approaches, including:
- Treatment with Oral Rehydration Salt (ORS) which can successfully treat up to 80% of cases;
- Enhanced surveillance to identify cholera hot spots and early detect outbreaks;
- Improved access to safe water and proper sanitation;
- Safe and effective Oral Cholera Vaccines (OCV);
- Community awareness for behavioural changes;
- Preparedness through national and cross-border plans.

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More information is available on the WHO website: [http://www.who.int/cholera/en/](http://www.who.int/cholera/en/)
4 strategic axes

1. Global Task Force on Cholera Control

   So that… collaboration among all stakeholders is strengthened leading to effective control of cholera.

   Major achievements

   - Revitalization of the Global Task Force on Cholera Control (GTFCC).
   - 1st meeting of the GTFCC in June 2014.
   - Creation of Working Groups on OCV, surveillance, training, WASH.

2. Integration of targeted interventions in selected hotspots

   So that… OCV campaigns and well-targeted preventive interventions be implemented to alleviate the burden of cholera on populations living in high risk areas and contribute to their sustainable development.

   Major achievements

   - Implementation of an OCV stockpile.
   - Mapping of critical hotspots.
   - Support to Member States to control and prevent cholera in high risk areas.

3. Enhanced surveillance for preparedness and improved outbreak response

   So that… outbreaks can be better anticipated and health care services are better prepared.

   Major achievements

   - Comprehensive analysis of cholera in the WHO African and Eastern Mediterranean Regions over the past 10 years.
   - Risk assessment in selected countries to better understand local dynamics of transmission for targeted interventions.
   - Support to countries facing outbreaks (e.g. Sierra Leone in 2012).

4. Research and innovation

   So that… evidence-based recommendations are developed to support control measures.

   Major achievements

   - Development of a research agenda
   - Monitoring and evaluation of OCV campaigns
   - Rapid test and molecular techniques

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The department of Pandemic and Epidemic Diseases (PED) develops strategies, initiatives, and mechanisms to address priority emerging and re-emerging epidemic diseases, including outbreaks, thereby reducing their impact on affected populations and limiting their international spread.