

Lebanon Crisis

Health Cluster Bulletin # 32

Wednesday 10 October 2007

The Lebanon Crisis Health Cluster Bulletin aims to give an overview of the health activities conducted by the health cluster partners in relation to the latest Lebanon conflict as well as the crisis in the Palestinian camps. It compiles health information received from the different organizations working in the most affected areas.

The Health Cluster Bulletin will be issued every other Wednesday.



Picture: WHO

*WHO, MoPH, Syndicate of Hospitals, and LSEM
"Hospital Emergency Preparedness planning"
workshops*

October 2007

Highlights

- No major outbreak was reported through the Early Warning and Response System (EWARS).
- The situation in Lebanon remains uncertain and tense.

Nahr El-Bared Crisis

- The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) is leading the Humanitarian and Relief interventions in response to the Nahr El-Bared Crisis.
- Preparations for the return to Naher El-Bared continue.

Situation Overview

- EWARS reports for the last two weeks, registered three cases of Hepatitis A that were confirmed clinically and serologically (One case from Hasbaya district and another two from Nabatiyeh district). In addition, one case of Hepatitis B was reported from Nabatiyeh district and two cases of Malaria from Nabatiyeh in patients with travel history to Africa. Further, three cases of Brucellosis were registered in Nabatiyeh district and Toulin as well as one case of Typhoid fever in Marjeyoun.

Nahr El-Bared Crisis

- The first one hundred families returned on October 10 to Naher El-Bared camp to discover their empty and/or burnt houses. UNRWA is assisting the returnees with water distribution awaiting the rehabilitation of water tanks by its WATSAN department as well as by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).
- Internally Displaced Refugees (IDRs) are still having shelters in Beddawi camp. This is resulting in delaying the start of the scholastic year in the camp's schools to which, 4,800 students are affiliated. Beddawi community leaders and parents committees are exercising pressure over the decision makers to take action.

Health Response to the Humanitarian Crisis

National and international Health Cluster partners are providing support in four core areas:

1. Assessment and monitoring

- Institute for Development, Research, Advocacy and Applied Care (IDRAAC) supported by WHO is conducting a project entitled: "Suicide in Lebanon: a Platform for taking National Action". The objective is to create a national data platform on suicide and suicide related behaviour to be used as an awareness raising and policy planning instrument by physicians in Primary Health care as well as decision and policy makers.
- WHO in collaboration with the Faculty of health Sciences at the American University of Beirut is undertaken a project entitled "Towards Accountable Public hospitals in Lebanon: Reporting of Hospitals Performance". The project purpose is to promote public hospitals' accountability to the communities they serve in Lebanon. All public hospitals in Lebanon will provide key quality indicators using similar tools measurement. It is foreseen that this project will create incentives for Public hospitals to improve quality of service.
- United Nations Resident Coordinator (UNRC) "one-year after follow up" report related to Marjeyoun district was completed. Further details can be retrieved from the UN website: <http://www.un.org.lb/subrecovery.asp?id=403>.
- WHO Public Health focal point visited 14 health centers in Bent Jbeil district aiming to improve surveillance data reporting.

Nahr El-Bared Crisis

- According to UNRWA, reports from Beddawi and Mina clinics as well as the mobile clinic showed no changes in the incidence of communicable diseases.

2. Health coordination

- The upcoming Health Cluster meeting is scheduled for October 16 at 15:00 p.m. at WHO office within the Ministry of Public Health premises-Tyr.
- The next Mental Health and Psychosocial Support sub-cluster is planned for October 29 at 12:00 p.m. at WHO office within the Ministry of Public health premises-Tyr.
- The next WATSAN meeting will be held on October 11 at 12:00 p.m. at the Water Authority Establishment-Saida. The meetings are taking place on monthly basis.
- The next General Coordination Meeting is planned for October 19 at 11:30 at the UN house-Tyr.
- The Health Cluster and Mental Health Matrices are regularly updated and shared with partners.

Nahr El-Bared Crisis

- Two new Health Cluster meetings chaired by UNRWA took place at UNRWA Lebanon Field Office in Beirut gathering respectively six and five partners. The next meeting is planned for October 23 at the same time and venue.
- UNRWA health coordinator discussed with ICRC and the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) the preparations for the return to Naher El-Bared camp.

3. Filling health gaps

- Caritas Liban supported by WHO is conducting a "Sensitization and Prevention campaign" through Caritas mobile clinic visiting the various villages and cities all over Lebanon. The 6-months campaign aims at early detection and prevention of some

chronic diseases. Thus, free of charge blood tests for Cholesterol, Triglycerides, Glucose as well as an EKG and an Osteoporosis test coupled with a medical consultation will be offered to the population alleviating two major hindering factors; the accessibility to and the affordability of these services. The population will be sensitized through conferences and educational materials distribution. Non Communicable Diseases prevalence data is expected to result from the project.

- Imam Sadr Foundation in collaboration with the Sovereign Order of Malta outreached during September through its specialized Medical Unit, 337 persons (mainly chronic patients), in the regions of Maroun Ras, Aynata, Tayri in Bent Jbeil district and Brayqi'l, Qsaybeh and Adshite in Nabatiyeh district.

Nahr El-Bared Crisis

- UNRWA and PRCS disinfection activities in Naher El-Bared camp continue. A team of 28 supervisors, laborers, and volunteers undertook the collection of refuse and food remains and sprayed the various regions of the new camp East and North to the old camp using lime powder along with rodent baits distribution. The disinfection activities will persist and cover the remaining sector South to the old camp.
- UNRWA assistance to the IDRs is maintained through the provision of medical services at its clinics as well as contractual tertiary care hospitals. Shelters visits and maintenance are still carried with water pumping (2.500 cubic meters daily) and solid waste disposal (100 cubic meters daily).
- PRCS will make available an ambulance with a team constituted of a doctor and two nurses at Naher El-Bared camp, during the presence of staff and volunteers of humanitarian agencies and other workers. The purpose is to ensure prompt response in case of emergency.
- Health Care Society is maintaining the chronic drugs distribution until depletion of the stock. If no funds are available, the society will end its activities in Beddawi camp.
- ICRC will provide technical assistance to repair damaged water tanks in the new camp part of Naher El-Bared as well as provide novel water tanks if needed.

4. Preserving and supporting local health systems

- Scientific Research Foundation (SRF) supported by WHO is implementing an "Agriculture Safety Awareness" project in Alma Al Chaab, Naqoura, Marwaheen, Yareen, Al Zouhayra, Al Boustan and Al Jebbayn, highly affected villages because of 2006 war on Lebanon. Forty adults' farmers and 60 young people aged 14-20 years will be trained on proper handling of pesticides and fertilizers. Further, they will participate in growing and handling plants activities. Educational materials will be produced to be used in increasing the public awareness in the future.
- L'Association de Bienfaisance de Rmeish, supported by WHO, is conducting an awareness campaign on Diabetes in Rmeish, Debel and Ein Ebel in the South. The project aims to increase the public awareness on diabetes, perform a public campaign for glucoses intolerance, sensitize the population on insulin replacement therapy and increase their knowledge and skills in relation to diabetes management.
- Green Hand Organization in collaboration with WHO is carrying on an awareness raising campaign entitled "Nargili-Not a Way of Life". The project will establish a group of 100 trainers from the various Lebanese governorates, which in their turn will disseminate awareness raising messages among youth (5.000), schools' teachers (100) and general population (7.000).
- WHO one-day workshops on "Hospital Emergency Preparedness planning" continues. Seven workshops were implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), the Syndicate of Hospitals and the Lebanese Society of Emergency Medicine (LSEM) reaching 214 participants from 49 hospitals.

World Health Organization

<http://www.leb.emro.who.int/>

<http://www.virtualhlc.org>

All inputs are welcome on: health@leb.emro.who.int