

EPIDEMIOLOGY UNIT

Ministry of Healthcare and Nutrition

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My No: EPID/035/ IV/2007(a)

16 May 2008

All Provincial Directors of Health Services

All Regional Directors of Health services

All Medical Officers of Health

Re: Chemoprophylaxis for Leptospirosis

(Further to my letter EPID/035/IV/2007)

At a recent meeting chaired by the Secretary, Ministry of Healthcare & Nutrition with the participation of DDG (PHS I), REE and MOOH of high risk areas for leptospirosis, following decisions were made regarding chemoprophylaxis for leptospirosis.

1. Chemoprophylaxis is not advocated as a routine and leading preventive strategy. It is **recommended only for well recognized high risk groups**. Discussion with farmers' organizations and agrarian services, and identification of high risk localities at the divisional level (e.g. clustering of cases in a particular area) will help to identify high risk groups.
2. There should be a **felt need** by farmers/ agricultural workers of such areas for prophylaxis i.e. a request for prophylaxis from farmers' organizations and/ or agrarian services.
3. If prophylaxis is given, it should be closely monitored by the MOH and the field public health staff. PHII should be involved in the issuance of medicines. A register should be maintained at the MOH level containing all the names, addresses and occupation of recipients and arrangements should be made to regularly distribute drugs to them for the required period..
4. The recommended dose is **Doxycycline 200 mg weekly during the period of possible exposure**. It is the responsibility of the relevant MOOH to identify the risk period. In this regard, they can seek advice from the Regional Epidemiologist and/ or the Epidemiology Unit.
5. The relevant MOOH should strengthen the disease surveillance activities in their areas especially where prophylaxis is provided.
6. MOOH who want to provide prophylaxis should send the drug estimate through relevant RE, RDHS and PDHS to Medical Supplies Division (MSD), Ministry of Healthcare & Nutrition, with a copy to the Chief Epidemiologist.

7. Doxycycline is a tetracycline antibiotic. It should not be given to children younger than 12 years old, pregnant and lactating mothers. Some may develop allergy and it should be avoided for them. Generally, it is not prescribed to patients with liver or kidney disease. If you have any doubt, please seek advice from the Consultant Physician of the nearest hospital. This drug can be taken with or without food, preferably with a full glass of water.

It was stressed that other primary prevention activities should not be neglected and they should be continued as usual. Please bring the contents of this letter to the notice of all officers concerned in your division / district / province. If you need any further clarification, please contact your area Regional Epidemiologist or Dr. N. Janakan, Consultant Epidemiologist at my unit.

Dr. M. R. N. Abeysinghe

Chief Epidemiologist

CC: Secretary, Ministry of Healthcare & Nutrition
Additional Secretary (MS), Ministry of Healthcare & Nutrition
DGHS, Ministry of Healthcare & Nutrition
DDG (PHS) I & II, Ministry of Healthcare & Nutrition
All Regional Epidemiologists