



# WEEKLY EPIDEMIOLOGICAL REPORT

A publication of the Epidemiology Unit  
Ministry of Health, Nutrition & Indigenous Medicine

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Vol. 43 No. 01

26<sup>th</sup> – 01<sup>st</sup> January 2016

## Flashback 2015 (Part 1)

This is the first in a series of two articles on the activities carried out by the Epidemiology Unit during the preceding year. The year 2015 was yet another eventful and successful year for the Epidemiology Unit.

Disease surveillance, closely integrated with the timely dissemination of these data to those responsible for preventing and controlling diseases, is a major function carried out by the Epidemiology Unit. Therefore, regular reviews are carried out by the Epidemiology unit to improve the quality of these activities. Such reviews were conducted in all Medical Officer of Health (MOH) offices in the districts of Matale, Puttlam, Galle, Trincomalee and Kandy.

Training of health care staff on Polio Virus type 2 withdrawal procedure was continued during 2015 and assured the readiness for Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV) introduction as the first step of Polio Virus type 2 withdrawal in Polio Eradication initiative. IPV was introduced to infants at the age of 4 months together with the 2nd dose of Pentavalent Vaccine and the 2nd dose of Oral Polio Vaccine from July 2016.

National Immunization Summit was conducted in January 2015 with the participation of all relevant stakeholders, experts in different fields and academia. Opportunity was provided for the vaccine suppliers to participate as observers for the first time at the summit. Introduction of Inacti-

vated Polio Vaccine, sero-conversion status after single dose of Live Japanese Encephalitis Vaccine (LJEV)-Sri Lankan experience after 5 years of introduction, cervical cancer burden and options for HPV vaccine introduction, immunization in pregnancy, measles immunity status in Sri Lankan population, invasive bacterial diseases and Rota virus gastro-enteritis surveillance in Sri Lanka, and the Hepatitis B seroprevalence survey findings in Sri Lanka were presented and discussed.

Advisory Committee on Communicable Diseases (ACCD) took a decision to change the age at which Mumps, Measles and Rubella (MMR) vaccine was given, considering evidence of outbreak analysis, sero-survey and immunization summit recommendations. First dose of MMR was given at the age of 9 months instead of at 1 year and Live Japanese Encephalitis Vaccine (LJEV) was shifted to 1 year instead of at 9 months.

Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) working group has been nominated and working group has submitted a consent paper regarding the requirement of HPV vaccine in the National Immunization Programme (NIP). ACCD decided to include HPV vaccine from 2017.

Measles outbreak continued during the previous year with a waning observed during the latter part of the year. The necessity of conducting

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laboratory test on all suspected cases of measles was highlighted and several reminders were sent to health care institutions.

It has been observed that the E- surveillance programme implemented in 2015 with the aim of minimizing possible errors in the paper based system, improving time management, avoiding postal delays has progressed well throughout the year. All 339 MOHs send their Weekly Return of Communicable Disease (WRCD) in a timely manner through E- surveillance system.

Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) is another very important responsibility of the Epidemiology Unit. Annual district EPI reviews were completed covering all 26 districts & National Institute of Health Sciences (NIHS) area.

Epidemiology Unit has gained recognition as a Training Center par excellence, at both national and international levels. The unit conducted training programmes for EPI managers from Bangladesh and Timor-Leste during the preceding year. A three day programme on effective vaccine management based on World Health Organization's Middle Level Managers' Training modules was conducted for 150 SPHMM, PHNSS and RSPHNOO from all over the country. All the SPHII in the country were given a refresher training on disease surveillance last year.

As per the WHO recommendation, Effective Vaccine Management (EVM) assessment was conducted by an external expert in July 2015. This assessment was conducted in all 26 Regional Medical Supply Divisions (RMDS) and also in selected MOH areas in the country. Overall, the assessment concluded that the vaccine management of NIP is at a remarkably high level. A Vaccine temperature monitoring study and a Temperature mapping study of storage areas were initiated by the Epidemiology Unit as a recommendation of the EVM.

During the WHO National Regulatory Authority (NRA) assessment conducted in August 2015, vaccine pharmacovigilance [Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI)] was assessed and found to be excellent. This is a WHO routine assessment conducted globally and Sri Lankan surveillance system of AEFI was considered as one of the best performing models in the world.

National Immunization Policy was developed with the leadership of the Epidemiology Unit and the policy was endorsed by the Cabinet Ministers in 2015, and was subsequently gazet-

ted. The Epidemiology Unit has commenced on developing National Strategic Plan as the implementing step of National Immunization Policy.

In October 2015, country EPI Review / Assessment was conducted by the WHO/SEAR regional office. This review was conducted by a group of external reviewers aided by a team of national experts. The overall conclusion was outstanding service delivery throughout the island, with many "best practices" to share with other countries. The review found strong central level support with high level advocacy, staff capacity, planning, decision-making processes for new vaccine introduction and schedule changes through vaccine advisory bodies and AEFI surveillance and investigation. Excellent EPI implementation and management is also based on the capacities and commitment of front line health care workers and the subsequent trust of communities.

Aggregate module of the Web Based Immunization Information System (WEBIIS) which replicates the manual Quarterly EPI Return (QEPIR) electronically is now fully implemented in 342 MOOH in the country. The key staff members involving in preparation of the QEPIR have been trained for this purpose. At the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2015, 70% of the MOOH were using the system.

Human rabies is an important disease, because of its essential fatality, the large number of animal bites taking place and sizeable number of deaths still occurring in Sri Lanka.

In the backdrop of Sri Lanka following the strategy for elimination of rabies by 2020, human rabies surveillance becomes an important part of the strategy. There were 24 human deaths reported from many parts of the country. This was an increase in number compared to last year where only 18 deaths had occurred. The guidelines on post exposure treatment was revised with the leadership of MRI and the contributions from many stake holders.

**Table 1: Selected notifiable diseases reported by Medical Officers of Health 19<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> Dec 2015 (52<sup>nd</sup> Week)**

| RDHS Division   | Dengue Fever |              | Dysentery |             | Encephalitis |            | Enteric Fever |            | Food Poisoning |             | Leptospirosis |             | Typhus Fever |             | Viral Hepatitis |             | Human Rabies |           | Chickenpox |             | Meningitis |            | Leishmaniasis |             | WRCD      |           |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|-------------|--------------|------------|---------------|------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------|-----------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|---------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|
|                 | A            | B            | A         | B           | A            | B          | A             | B          | A              | B           | A             | B           | A            | B           | A               | B           | A            | B         | A          | B           | A          | B          | A             | B           | T*        | C**       |
| Colombo         | 142          | 9746         | 1         | 183         | 1            | 18         | 1             | 101        | 0              | 124         | 0             | 315         | 1            | 12          | 1               | 51          | 0            | 4         | 1          | 487         | 0          | 46         | 0             | 1           | 44        | 56        |
| Gampaha         | 8            | 3967         | 0         | 90          | 0            | 15         | 0             | 37         | 0              | 33          | 0             | 434         | 0            | 11          | 0               | 137         | 0            | 0         | 0          | 309         | 0          | 39         | 0             | 3           | 13        | 87        |
| Kalutara        | 20           | 1529         | 1         | 120         | 0            | 8          | 0             | 58         | 0              | 154         | 1             | 430         | 0            | 7           | 0               | 36          | 0            | 3         | 1          | 295         | 1          | 63         | 0             | 0           | 36        | 64        |
| Kandy           | 32           | 1316         | 5         | 179         | 0            | 7          | 0             | 32         | 0              | 72          | 4             | 133         | 1            | 76          | 0               | 153         | 0            | 0         | 3          | 240         | 1          | 33         | 0             | 17          | 83        | 17        |
| Matale          | 1            | 401          | 2         | 48          | 0            | 2          | 0             | 10         | 0              | 13          | 0             | 65          | 0            | 9           | 1               | 36          | 0            | 0         | 1          | 35          | 1          | 45         | 2             | 36          | 69        | 31        |
| NuwaraEliya     | 8            | 178          | 0         | 324         | 0            | 5          | 2             | 41         | 0              | 10          | 0             | 53          | 0            | 76          | 1               | 66          | 0            | 0         | 0          | 143         | 0          | 55         | 0             | 2           | 62        | 38        |
| Galle           | 16           | 1017         | 0         | 95          | 0            | 3          | 0             | 10         | 0              | 26          | 3             | 289         | 1            | 111         | 0               | 13          | 0            | 0         | 1          | 283         | 1          | 62         | 0             | 3           | 55        | 45        |
| Hambantota      | 6            | 397          | 0         | 52          | 0            | 5          | 0             | 9          | 0              | 31          | 4             | 172         | 0            | 63          | 1               | 49          | 0            | 0         | 7          | 147         | 0          | 13         | 12            | 322         | 83        | 17        |
| Matara          | 6            | 458          | 0         | 74          | 0            | 12         | 0             | 5          | 0              | 47          | 2             | 269         | 0            | 53          | 0               | 52          | 0            | 1         | 4          | 247         | 0          | 20         | 6             | 161         | 82        | 18        |
| Jaffna          | 109          | 2016         | 14        | 1087        | 0            | 11         | 4             | 186        | 0              | 89          | 0             | 21          | 28           | 767         | 0               | 14          | 0            | 2         | 3          | 213         | 0          | 21         | 0             | 0           | 100       | 0         |
| Kilinochchi     | 0            | 91           | 2         | 117         | 0            | 1          | 1             | 21         | 0              | 31          | 0             | 2           | 0            | 27          | 0               | 0           | 0            | 1         | 0          | 20          | 0          | 2          | 0             | 0           | 50        | 50        |
| Mannar          | 3            | 104          | 0         | 23          | 0            | 3          | 0             | 6          | 0              | 6           | 1             | 9           | 0            | 24          | 0               | 0           | 0            | 0         | 0          | 7           | 0          | 1          | 0             | 1           | 40        | 60        |
| Vavuniya        | 13           | 191          | 2         | 34          | 1            | 9          | 0             | 80         | 1              | 33          | 0             | 20          | 0            | 15          | 0               | 2           | 0            | 2         | 0          | 40          | 0          | 21         | 0             | 8           | 50        | 50        |
| Mullaitivu      | 5            | 140          | 0         | 47          | 0            | 2          | 0             | 18         | 0              | 16          | 1             | 13          | 0            | 9           | 1               | 7           | 0            | 1         | 0          | 5           | 0          | 6          | 0             | 9           | 40        | 60        |
| Batticaloa      | 22           | 1472         | 3         | 352         | 0            | 8          | 0             | 30         | 0              | 182         | 0             | 34          | 0            | 4           | 1               | 14          | 0            | 1         | 0          | 62          | 0          | 18         | 0             | 0           | 86        | 14        |
| Ampara          | 0            | 65           | 0         | 43          | 0            | 2          | 0             | 2          | 0              | 19          | 0             | 23          | 0            | 2           | 0               | 14          | 0            | 0         | 0          | 201         | 0          | 5          | 0             | 3           | 0         | 100       |
| Trincomalee     | 11           | 586          | 4         | 137         | 0            | 0          | 0             | 39         | 0              | 57          | 0             | 18          | 0            | 26          | 9               | 98          | 0            | 1         | 0          | 122         | 0          | 12         | 0             | 6           | 58        | 42        |
| Kurunegala      | 9            | 1245         | 3         | 267         | 0            | 8          | 0             | 8          | 0              | 28          | 2             | 366         | 0            | 31          | 0               | 47          | 0            | 10        | 6          | 426         | 0          | 41         | 0             | 149         | 41        | 59        |
| Puttalam        | 3            | 702          | 1         | 153         | 0            | 6          | 0             | 9          | 0              | 9           | 1             | 48          | 0            | 23          | 0               | 3           | 0            | 1         | 0          | 73          | 0          | 36         | 0             | 3           | 38        | 62        |
| Anuradhapura    | 1            | 387          | 0         | 167         | 0            | 5          | 0             | 5          | 0              | 67          | 3             | 396         | 0            | 24          | 1               | 26          | 0            | 1         | 0          | 196         | 0          | 39         | 6             | 343         | 47        | 53        |
| Polonnaruwa     | 2            | 246          | 0         | 66          | 0            | 5          | 0             | 17         | 0              | 13          | 2             | 159         | 0            | 1           | 0               | 13          | 0            | 0         | 0          | 157         | 0          | 26         | 0             | 129         | 43        | 57        |
| Badulla         | 6            | 557          | 1         | 258         | 0            | 16         | 0             | 13         | 0              | 28          | 2             | 92          | 1            | 138         | 1               | 228         | 0            | 3         | 1          | 212         | 3          | 117        | 0             | 8           | 47        | 53        |
| Monaragala      | 2            | 222          | 0         | 121         | 0            | 5          | 0             | 17         | 0              | 5           | 3             | 200         | 1            | 86          | 3               | 483         | 0            | 1         | 0          | 107         | 0          | 32         | 0             | 40          | 55        | 45        |
| Ratnapura       | 9            | 1024         | 4         | 311         | 0            | 23         | 0             | 43         | 0              | 10          | 3             | 408         | 0            | 73          | 0               | 323         | 0            | 1         | 2          | 214         | 1          | 58         | 0             | 19          | 44        | 56        |
| Kegalle         | 10           | 704          | 3         | 90          | 0            | 17         | 2             | 95         | 0              | 25          | 4             | 349         | 0            | 56          | 0               | 86          | 0            | 0         | 1          | 282         | 0          | 59         | 0             | 0           | 45        | 55        |
| Kalmune         | 11           | 530          | 0         | 137         | 0            | 2          | 0             | 3          | 0              | 67          | 0             | 13          | 0            | 0           | 0               | 7           | 0            | 1         | 0          | 110         | 0          | 15         | 0             | 0           | 23        | 77        |
| <b>SRILANKA</b> | <b>455</b>   | <b>29291</b> | <b>46</b> | <b>4575</b> | <b>2</b>     | <b>198</b> | <b>10</b>     | <b>895</b> | <b>1</b>       | <b>1195</b> | <b>36</b>     | <b>4331</b> | <b>33</b>    | <b>1724</b> | <b>20</b>       | <b>1958</b> | <b>0</b>     | <b>34</b> | <b>31</b>  | <b>4633</b> | <b>8</b>   | <b>885</b> | <b>26</b>     | <b>1263</b> | <b>53</b> | <b>47</b> |

Source: Weekly Returns of Communicable Diseases (WRCD).

\*T=Timeliness refers to returns received on or before 25<sup>th</sup> December, 2015 Total number of reporting units 337 Number of reporting units data provided for the current week: 182 C\*\*=Completeness  
A = Cases reported during the current week. B = Cumulative cases for the year.

**Table 2: Vaccine-Preventable Diseases & AFP**

19<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> Dec 2015 (52<sup>nd</sup> Week)

| Disease               | No. of Cases by Province |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     | Number of cases during current week in 2015 | Number of cases during same week in 2014 | Total number of cases to date in 2015 | Total number of cases to date in 2014 | Difference between the number of cases to date in 2015 & 2014 |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|---|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
|                       | W                        | C  | S  | N  | E  | NW | NC | U  | Sab |   |  |                                       |                                       |   |
| AFP*                  | 01                       | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00  | 01  | 01                                       | 72                                    | 84                                    | -14.2%  |
| Diphtheria            | 00                       | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00  | 00  | 00                                       | 00                                    | 00                                    | 0%  |
| Mumps                 | 00                       | 01 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 01 | 00 | 00 | 00  | 02  | 06                                       | 386                                   | 656                                   | -41.1%  |
| Measles               | 02                       | 00 | 00 | 00 | 01 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 02  | 05  | 10                                       | 2593                                  | 3094                                  | -16.1%  |
| Rubella               | 00                       | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00  | 00  | 00                                       | 08                                    | 17                                    | -53.1%  |
| CRS**                 | 00                       | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00  | 00  | 00                                       | 00                                    | 04                                    | -100%   |
| Tetanus               | 00                       | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00  | 00  | 00                                       | 16                                    | 15                                    | +6.6%   |
| Neonatal Tetanus      | 00                       | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00  | 00  | 00                                       | 00                                    | 00                                    | 0%  |
| Japanese Encephalitis | 00                       | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00  | 00  | 00                                       | 15                                    | 22                                    | -32.1%  |
| Whooping Cough        | 00                       | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00  | 00  | 01                                       | 105                                   | 79                                    | +33.1%  |
| Tuberculosis          | 33                       | 12 | 02 | 08 | 00 | 10 | 02 | 09 | 00  | 76  | 131                                      | 9597                                  | 9580                                  | +0.1%   |

**Key to Table 1 & 2**

Provinces: W: Western, C: Central, S: Southern, N: North, E: East, NC: North Central, NW: North Western, U: Uva, Sab: Sabaragamuwa.  
 RDHS Divisions: CB: Colombo, GM: Gampaha, KL: Kalutara, KD: Kandy, ML: Matale, NE: Nuwara Eliya, GL: Galle, HB: Hambantota, MT: Matara, JF: Jaffna, KN: Killinochchi, MN: Mannar, VA: Vavuniya, MU: Mullaitivu, BT: Batticaloa, AM: Ampara, TR: Trincomalee, KM: Kalmunai, KR: Kurunegala, PU: Puttalam, AP: Anuradhapura, PO: Polonnaruwa, BD: Badulla, MO: Moneragala, RP: Ratnapura, KG: Kegalle.

**Data Sources:**

**Weekly Return of Communicable Diseases:** Diphtheria, Measles, Tetanus, Neonatal Tetanus, Whooping Cough, Chickenpox, Meningitis, Mumps., Rubella, CRS,

**Special Surveillance:** AFP\* (Acute Flaccid Paralysis), Japanese Encephalitis

CRS\*\* =Congenital Rubella Syndrome

AFP and all clinically confirmed Vaccine Preventable Diseases except Tuberculosis and Mumps should be investigated by the MOH

**Dengue Prevention and Control Health Messages**

**Look for plants such as bamboo, bohemia, rampe and banana in your surroundings and maintain them**

**PRINTING OF THIS PUBLICATION IS FUNDED BY THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO).**

Comments and contributions for publication in the WER Sri Lanka are welcome. However, the editor reserves the right to accept or reject items for publication. All correspondence should be mailed to The Editor, WER Sri Lanka, Epidemiological Unit, P.O. Box 1567, Colombo or sent by E-mail to [chepid@sltnet.lk](mailto:chepid@sltnet.lk). Prior approval should be obtained from the Epidemiology Unit before publishing data in this publication

**ON STATE SERVICE**

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