



WEEKLY EPIDEMIOLOGICAL REPORT

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

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Flashback 2021 Part I

This is the first article of the series of two articles

Covid-19 Pandemic was protracted to its second year, (2021). The Epidemiology Unit had to be on its toes to deliver its technical role in leading the Ministry of Health to manage the outbreak.

While giving its best to control the Covid-19 situation in the country, the other functions of the unit, mainly the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) and the disease surveillance (both vaccine-preventable and other important communicable diseases) activities were also carried out with great enthusiasm.

COVID-19 Pandemic

Sri Lanka reported its first COVID-19 patient on 28th January 2020. The official Covid-19 situation report of the Ministry of Health was started by the Epidemiology Unit as a daily publication on the same date. This provided the global and local situation of COVID-19 to the media and international organizations. This was continued throughout the year 2021 and was available on the Epidemiology unit website. The Epidemiology Unit actively participated

in the media updates, seminars, and workshops conducted by the Ministry of Health on COVID-19 and related topics on an almost daily basis. Also, documentary programs, talk shows, and live discussions on the Covid-19 outbreak and response on both radio and television channels were conducted for public awareness.

Already existing Influenza-like Illness (ILI) surveillance system was geared for testing for COVID-19 also. Samples of fever patients who have visited the designated hospitals for treatment around the country were tested for COVID. To strengthen the COVID -19 surveillance around the country a circular (EPID/400/COVID-19/VOL-4) was issued on 22.03.2021 to perform PCR testing for COVID -19 of all the patients with COVID-19 like symptoms attending all Base Hospitals and hospitals selected as sentinel sites.

Covid-19 Vaccination Campaign

The National Deployment and Vaccination Plan (NDVP) was prepared, including the priority groups, vaccine storage capacity, funding possibilities, vaccine options, vaccination implementation plan, and post-vaccination evaluation plan, and was sub-

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mitted to the COVAX facility. Three consignments of the COVISHIELD vaccine were received by the country. Then they were distributed according to the national COVID-19 vaccination plan. The guidelines for the COVISHIELD vaccination campaign were developed by the Epidemiology Unit, and the hospital and field staff were orientated on these guidelines. Further, capacity-building sessions were carried out for field staff to improve their skills and knowledge of COVISHIELD vaccination. The vaccine logistics were also prepared by the unit; vaccine registers, tally sheets, vaccine clinic returns and were distributed among the field staff.

The Covid vaccination commenced on 29.01.2021. Initially, it was given for the health care workers, non-health frontline workers involved in COVID 19 control activities and high-risk communities in the Western province.

Subsequently, Sputnik and Sinopharm vaccine guidelines were also developed by the Epidemiology Unit and field staff were trained accordingly. The Sputnik vaccine which required ultra-cold chain facilities was commenced in the Kandy district with the guidance of the Epidemiology Unit. The Sinopharm vaccine also started according to the National Vaccine Deployment Plan in mid-2021.

Afterwards, Moderna and Pfizer vaccine guidelines were also developed. They were successfully procured, stored, and dispatched to the selected districts in the country and the vaccination campaigns were implemented after completing the relevant training programmes for the field health staff.

Pfizer vaccination guidelines were developed for the school-going children in the latter half of 2021. The school vaccination programme was also successfully implemented with the support of the Ministry of Education and the other stakeholders. At the end of the year 2021, the Pfizer booster campaign was commenced by the Epidemiology Unit.

The vaccination campaign was closely monitored by the

Epidemiology Unit. Regular communications were carried out between the Epidemiology Unit staff and the field staff, and necessary guidance was given to ensure the smooth progression of the campaign.

Regular supervisory visits were conducted by supervisory teams to the community vaccination centres. These teams were headed by a Consultant Epidemiologist and comprised of Medical Officers of the Epidemiology Unit, to ensure the vaccination guidelines are properly followed and standardized service is delivered by the staff of the vaccination centres.

Daily updates on the number of vaccinations carried out in each district and other institutions were obtained, and the compiled information on vaccination was shared daily among relevant authorities. This information was also released to the press daily. These updates enable the Epidemiology Unit to keep track of the vaccination campaign.

The Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI) were also monitored closely. A hotline that was functional 24 hours had been released and two acting Consultant Community Physicians were assigned the responsibility of following up on the reported severe adverse events. The data relating to AEFI were compiled and utilised for the improvement of the vaccination campaign.

The Epidemiology Unit was the coordinating centre for the development of the Covid-19 clinical guidelines with the collaboration of the relevant Professional Colleges. Further, they were updated subsequently.

Covid-19 death surveillance was commenced after the preparation of the required guidelines. A daily report was issued to the media and other relevant stakeholders for necessary actions.

The guidelines related to the disposal of the Covid-19 dead bodies were also developed with the collaboration of the relevant stakeholders and updated subsequently with the evolvement of the new scientific knowledge on the subject.

Table 1: Selected notifiable diseases reported by Medical Officers of Health 25th-31st Dec 2021 (53rd Week)

RDHS	Dengue Fever		Dysentery		Encephaliti		Enteric Fever		Food Poi-		Leptospirosis		Typhus		Viral Hep-		Human		Chickenpox		Meningitis		Leishmania-		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	40	6681	0	12	0	1	0	5	0	4	12	236	0	3	0	2	0	3	1	27	0	14	0	1	43	100
Gampaha	43	4207	0	5	0	7	0	1	0	0	3	337	0	9	0	4	0	5	0	28	1	17	0	13	22	74
Kalutara	20	1812	0	15	0	2	0	3	0	5	23	729	0	3	0	1	0	1	3	80	1	25	0	0	33	87
Kandy	72	1020	3	27	0	1	1	6	0	15	6	298	2	45	0	4	0	0	0	48	1	23	1	35	54	100
Matale	4	266	0	13	0	4	0	0	0	0	1	95	0	6	0	3	0	1	2	15	0	8	1	287	48	100
NuwareEliya	7	65	1	18	0	2	0	5	0	0	0	73	0	43	0	4	0	0	1	31	0	8	0	1	28	100
Galle	44	583	1	14	0	1	0	5	0	7	14	788	0	28	0	2	0	0	0	62	1	37	0	2	37	100
Hambantota	25	404	0	20	0	2	0	2	0	9	8	290	2	77	0	8	0	0	1	56	3	38	21	523	64	100
Matara	31	600	0	8	0	1	0	1	0	0	7	359	0	17	0	3	0	0	1	60	0	11	6	344	40	100
Jaifna	74	312	0	50	0	3	1	32	0	29	5	33	30	557	0	0	0	6	3	37	0	5	0	2	20	87
Kilinochchi	9	39	0	26	0	0	0	2	0	10	2	60	4	88	0	2	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	1	50	100
Mannar	18	391	1	10	0	1	1	5	0	0	2	32	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	6	2	24	0	1	35	100
Vavuniya	3	56	0	4	0	2	0	1	0	2	0	25	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	6	0	2	0	2	37	100
Mullaitivu	0	8	0	3	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	35	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	11	0	0	21	100
Batticaloa	25	3128	2	45	0	8	0	4	0	36	2	57	0	0	0	1	0	0	4	22	2	28	0	0	48	100
Ampara	2	70	0	12	0	0	0	1	0	7	1	86	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	48	0	20	0	15	55	100
Trincomalee	30	258	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	5	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	19	0	2	0	1	26	100
Kurunegala	23	1781	0	20	0	4	0	0	0	11	12	573	1	33	0	4	0	2	3	62	2	99	12	410	33	100
Puttalam	90	554	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	2	3	34	0	17	0	2	0	1	0	19	0	38	0	11	38	96
Anuradhapur	13	236	0	16	0	2	0	1	0	3	17	272	3	30	1	7	0	0	1	36	1	51	20	340	21	91
Polonnaruwa	8	101	0	8	0	1	0	3	0	10	7	156	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	31	0	3	7	516	35	100
Badulla	78	751	1	15	0	0	0	3	0	0	8	342	2	54	2	53	0	0	0	46	0	19	1	25	40	100
Monaragala	14	170	0	18	0	0	0	3	0	6	19	453	1	39	2	109	0	1	0	30	0	68	1	52	47	100
Ratnapura	47	658	1	34	0	8	0	0	1	8	25	919	0	24	0	11	0	1	1	57	4	94	1	123	31	95
Kegalle	42	603	0	4	0	11	0	0	1	3	16	648	0	15	0	3	0	0	1	96	2	38	0	32	38	100
Kalmune	10	333	3	36	0	2	0	4	0	5	0	22	0	1	0	2	0	2	0	20	2	23	0	2	42	100
SRI LANKA	20	25087	13	437	0	64	4	88	2	175	19	6957	45	110	5	23	0	23	0	23	22	706	71	2739	38	97

Source: Weekly Returns of Communicable Diseases (esurveillance.epid.gov.lk). T=Timeliness refers to returns received on or before 31st Dec, 2021 Total number of reporting units 361 Number of reporting units data provided for the current week. 3:46 C**=Completeness

Table 2: Vaccine-Preventable Diseases & AFP **25th– 31st Dec 2021 (53rd Week)**

Disease	No. of Cases by Province									Number of cases during current week in 2022	Number of cases during same week in 2021	Total number of cases to date in 2022	Total number of cases to date in 2021	Difference between the number of cases to date in 2022 & 2021
	W	C	S	N	E	NW	NC	U	Sab					
AFP*	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	NA	72	NA	NA
Diphtheria	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	NA	00	NA	NA
Mumps	00	00	00	00	00	01	00	00	00	01	NA	70	NA	NA
Measles	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	NA	13	NA	NA
Rubella	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	NA	00	NA	NA
CRS**	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	NA	00	NA	NA
Tetanus	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	NA	05	NA	NA
Neonatal Tetanus	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	NA	00	NA	NA
Japanese Encephalitis	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	NA	04	NA	NA
Whooping Cough	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	NA	00	NA	NA
Tuberculosis	32	04	00	12	05	02	06	07	06	74	NA	5201	NA	NA

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
NA = Not Available

Covid-19 Prevention & Control

For everyone's health & safety, maintain physical distance, often wash hands, wear a face mask and stay home.

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@slt.net.lk. **Prior approval should be obtained from the Epidemiology Unit before publishing data in this publication**

ON STATE SERVICE

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