

Mild Hand-Foot-And-Mouth Disease Turns Deadly For Children In Vietnam

Monday, April 09, 2012

<http://www.asianscientist.com/topnews/hand-foot-and-mouth-disease-deadly-south-vietnam-children-2012/>

AsianScientist (Apr. 9, 2012) - A dangerous strain of the typically non-lethal hand-foot-and-mouth disease (HFMD) has affected more than 21,000 persons - mostly children younger than five - killing 16 thus far in Vietnam, according to the Ministry of Health.

HFMD's symptoms are fever, sores in the mouth and blisters on the hands and feet. The disease spreads by direct contact with fluids from infected persons and there is no specific treatment.

Most of the viruses that cause HFMD are benign, but EV71 can be fatal.

"Despite being a benign viral infection in developed countries, the strain EV71 of HFMD is causing multiple deaths of children under five here in Asia. We are especially worried about South Vietnam, where lots of children are in informal (hygienically unregulated) crèches while their parents work," Bhupinder Tomar, representative of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in Vietnam, told IRIN.

The new strain appeared in Vietnam over the past year and since then it has become a serious public health issue for children, according to the World Health Organization.

The risk of catching HFMD is greatly reduced by improving hygiene, which IFRC is trying to promote through an existing public education campaign.

In 2011 there were 110,000 reported infections and 169 deaths linked to EV71, mostly in the south of the country. The disease is active year-round and peaks between April-May and then again in September-October.

In March 2012 there were twice as many deaths and seven times as many infections as in the same period last year.

Source: [IRIN](#).

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