

AN INCREASE OF DENGUE HAEMORRHAGIC FEVER
IN COLOMBO IN THE FIRST QUARTER
OF 1989 AND ITS POSSIBLE SIGNIFICANCE

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A W.H.O. funded Dengue surveillance project has been conducted in Colombo by the Medical Research Institute since November, 1980.

This study entails monitoring of (a) fever cases with haemorrhage admitted to Lady Ridgeway Hospital for children (LRH) (b) cases attending selected municipal clinics (c) school cohorts and (d) vector mosquitoes.

The diagnosis of dengue infections were made by haemagglutination inhibition and neutralization tests and by virus isolation.

The confirmed Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever (DHF) cases from L.R.H. during the years 1981 - 1988 have been varying from one to ten cases per year. There were no cases of DHF in the first three months of most of these years while there was one each in 1981, 1984 and 1988. However in 1989 during the first three months there were seven confirmed cases of DHF, a significant increase

But there did not appear to be an increase of Dengue fever cases, 2 (8%), when compared with the years 1981 - 1988. Incidence of Dengue positives among fever cases studied during the first three months of each year from 1981 to 1988 have been 6 (18.7%), 3 (10%), 17 (11.6%), 17 (31.5%), 5 (10.9%), 14 (14%), 11 (15.7%), and 3 (9.1%) respectively.

The vector mosquito densities too remained as low as in previous years.

It would appear, therefore, that the number of DHF cases alone have increased raising the possibility that a more virulent strain of virus may have been introduced into the country. This needs further study.