

Dr. Beat Richner, Kantha Bopha Children's Hospitals

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## **Urgent message**

Since the end of April 2012 in the Kantha Bopha Children's Hospitals 66 children were admitted with just same symptoms and clinical findings. The children, most between 2 and 3 years old, suffered from Encephalitis. They develop in the last hours of their life a total destruction of the alveolas in the lungs. Up to now 64 have died. Only two have survived. The last week from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> July there were only two cases.

On 20<sup>th</sup> June, after having discussed this in Cambodia new picture of disease since early May with the Ministry of Health, and after having got no positive results by Institut Pasteur, which whom we cooperate since beginning of the discovery of this for Cambodia new phenomena in our 5 Hospitals, we wrote a letter to the Minister of Health suggesting as causing reason a Enterovirus, or an intoxication by a medication outside of our Hospitals, or both. All the 64 cases who have died were treated outside by private clinics before they were brought to the Kantha Bopha Hospitals.

Yesterday the Institut Pasteur could confirm, that in the majority of the above described cases the Enterovirus Type 71 was found. Still we have now to see what really is causing the deadly pulmonary complication and see if a toxic factor is playing a role too. Why only a very few children infected by Enterovirus 71 are doing this awful destruction of the lungs?

Unfortunately WHO has given a declaration on July 2<sup>nd</sup> to Reuters without being clear on the facts being presented on 29<sup>th</sup> June in the Ministry of Health by Kantha Bopha to all the officials of Health. WHO was telling whole the world: New mystery killer disease in Cambodia! This was causing unnecessary panic in Cambodia.

On the level of public health it is not an alarming issue: The 5 Kantha Bopha Hospitals are covering 85% of all Cambodian sick children. In case of the Dengue Fever Kantha Bopha is covering 92%. In June 75 799 sick children were treated in our outpatient stations. 16 517 severely sick children had to be hospitalized, among them 5534 severe cases of the Hemorrhagic Dengue Fever. In June only 34 cases with this above described "new" disease were hospitalized. This declaration by WHO, which is not at all involved in this matter, to Reuters on July 2<sup>nd</sup> was neither professional nor necessary, but causing panic for nothing.

Dr. Beat Richner, Founder and Head of the Kantha Bopha Children's Hospitals in Cambodia.