

# Cholera in Cambodia

## The number of Cholera cases in the Children's Hospitals Kantha Bopha is increasing

Since November 15<sup>th</sup> 2009, when the first case of Cholera since 1998 in Cambodia in our hospital Kantha Bopha IV was confirmed, there have been 320 severely sick Cholera children with dehydration caused by vomiting and severe diarrhea admitted to Kantha Bopha IV in Phnom Penh. **All of these 320 Cholera cases were severe.** They could not have survived without this hospitalization. **In 130 of these cases, the Vibrio Cholerae was confirmed** by our laboratory. The number of cases have been increasing. In February (1 to 23) there were 158 cases hospitalized, 65 of which were confirmed by the laboratory.

We do not hospitalize the children suffering from simple diarrhea who arrive at our outpatient stations (3,000 outpatients per day). **These days there is much less seasonable diarrheas compared to December 2009.**

WHO was quoted in a newspaper as saying that Cholera is "in theory not a deadly disease." In 3 cases of Cholera children being hospitalized in Kantha Bopha we learned that people were dying in the neighborhood with the same symptoms at the same time ( 4 in Kampong Speu, 3 in Kampong Chnang, 1 in Kandal).

WHO was quoted in a newspaper as saying that Cholera can only be confirmed in the laboratories of 4 Hospitals in Phnom Penh. WHO is not informed that in Siem Reap Angkor the Kantha Bopha III Hospital (Jayavarman VII) is hospitalizing 650 severely sick children, treating 1,200 outpatients per day, admitting 130 severely sick children daily for hospitalization. Cholera has been confirmed in this laboratory as well. But in Siem Reap there is so far only one case confirmed coming from Poippet. As of now, only the southern part of Cambodia has been hit by Cholera.

The Cholera Epidemic started in November 2009 in and around Phnom Penh. Still today most children are arriving from these original Cholera places: Stung Mean Chey (Phnom Penh), where there are garbage depositions, and Saang (Kandal, next to Phnom Penh).

Instead of blaming the Cambodian people for not drinking clean water, the authorities should disinfect all poor sanitarian installations and open air toilets where flies are picking up the "Vibrio Cholerae" and bringing it to the food. In March and April the numbers of flies will increase. Flies as well as Cambodians are traveling and bringing Cholera to all the provinces. As of now, the measures in public health have not been efficient. Not even in the original main places known to WHO since November 2009 in which we have asked that a state of emergency be declared.