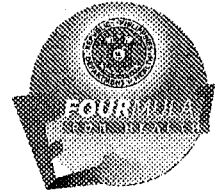




Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Building 1, San Lazaro Compound, Rizal Avenue
Sta. Cruz, Manila, Philippines

Tel. Nos. (632)7119502, 7119503 and 781-4362, Telefax No. (632) 743-1829



DOH KEEPS CLOSE WATCH VS MALARIA

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The Department of Health (DOH) is now closely monitoring two areas where clustering of malaria cases has been detected. These areas are Sitio Gala in Subic, Zambales and the municipality of Tupi in the South Cotabato province.

To avert the increasing number of cases in the said areas, the DOH has already done active case finding and treatment, distribution of treated mosquito nets, insecticide residual spraying, and information and education campaign among local residents of affected and neighboring barangays.

Many provinces in the country are still endemic for malaria, including Zambales and South Cotabato," explains Health Secretary Francisco T. Duque III. "We want to assure the public that we are keeping an eye on these areas and instituting preventive and control measures with the help of our local health teams so that we can bring down cases in the country," the health chief added.

The resurgence of cases in Sitio Gala was noted after four local residents were admitted in Olongapo City resulting in the death of a 10-year old girl last Sunday due to cerebral malaria. Two patients are still confined in the hospital while one had already been discharged.

Based on the investigation of the local health office and the Center for Health Development of Central Luzon (CHDIII), cases started to appear in April largely affecting indigenous groups in Sitio Gala. To date, the ongoing mass blood survey in the affected barangays has already revealed 27 cases positive for malaria. CHD III in coordination with the local government unit has been relentless in its control operations and is now strictly watching over the affected and adjacent communities.

Meanwhile, a total of 28 cases have been confirmed in Tupi, South Cotabato province since early May mostly coming from barangay Palian. Seven of these cases were admitted and treated at the Real Senator Memorial Hospital while 21 others were treated as outpatients. All cases were positive for *Plasmodium vivax* and no deaths were reported.

The Malaria Control Team in South Cotabato identified the presence of migrant workers at local plantations as well as the presence of streams and poor environmental and housing conditions in affected barangays as sources of rapid transmission. Presently, monitoring and surveillance have been intensified in addition to measures to contain the reemergence of cases.

Malaria is a disease caused by a bite from an infected mosquito causing flu-like symptoms like high fever, chills, muscle pains, and diarrhea. Serious sequelae may include fatal complications affecting the heart, lung, kidney or brain.