Access to clean and safe water: important requirement in the cholera elimination strategy

Editorial

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“Considering the risks above, we must emphasise to all stakeholders that there is need for sustaining scaling up of key interventions particularly those of medium and long term”, said Honourable Chitalu Chilufya who notes inadequate access to clean and safe water as a major driver to the cholera outbreaks in Zambia in his last press briefing to declare the 2017/18 cholera outbreak in Zambia over.

Cholera often referred to as a disease of inequity is preventable yet continues to torment many of the poorest and vulnerable populations. The CDC quotes global access to clean and safe water as an important driver to ensuring reduced illness and death from disease such as cholera [1]. This is a well-known fact and yet many countries in the developing world still struggle with access to clean and safe water leading to increased waterborne diseases and outbreaks. Among the major causes of cholera outbreaks globally which is mainly transmitted through consumption of Vibrio cholerae contaminated water exacerbated by inadequate or no access to clean and safe water [2]. Evidence from the risk assessment to determine the drivers of the 2017/18 cholera outbreak in Zambia qualify these findings [3]. In a world of vast innovations and resources, basic needs such as access to safe water remain unequally distributed. According to the World Health Organisation close to 850 million people lack access to basic drinking water sources and over 2 billion drink water contaminated with faecal matter [4]. Lack of access to safe water sources has pushed vulnerable populations to alternative unsafe sources such as surface water, unprotected and possibly contaminated wells [3, 5]. It is no surprise that diseases such as cholera continue to be a major public health concern.

In conclusion, a major part of the solution to eliminating cholera is to ensure universal access to clean and safe water. After all it is a basic human right and Lusaka Water and Sewerage Company in Zambia puts it ‘Water is Life’. The Global Task Force on Cholera Control say ending cholera is not only an incredible opportunity but a moral obligation and critical step towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals [6].

A note

The Health Press – Zambia (THP –Z) welcomes you all its June issue. Midway through 2018, we have enjoyed reviewing and publishing a number of submissions to from our authors. The Editor-in-Chief and Managing Editor have had the privilege of representing the publication at two important meetings including the Council for Scientific Editors (CSE) in New Orleans, USA (May 2018) and the Africa Journal Partnership Program (AJPP) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (June 2018).

The feedback received at these two meetings is that for a very young journal of less than 18 months we have done very well in terms of content, visibility and outlook. This credit goes to the authors, reviewers and editorial board who have made it possible.

To further increase visibility and make the content more impactful we are embarking on a journey to get indexed in PubMed Central, AJOL and other platforms till we get onto Medline. As a matter of fact some articles have had impact such as the policy briefs including ‘mandatory TB testing for health workers’ and ‘HIV testing’ which have been actioned into policy.

We invite you authors to continue submitting quality manuscripts as this will in part determine our being indexed.

In this issue we publish a ministerial press statement by Honourable Dr Chitalu Chilufya, Minister of Health declaring the 2017/18 cholera outbreak in Zambia over. Indeed last issue we did express hope that we were at the ‘tail end’ of the outbreak. We also publish and research article that provides evidence on antibiotic resistant Salmonella in broilers chickens consumed by the public. It is our hope that the findings on the drug resistant organisms being found in chickens may influence the policy drive and actions related on the indiscriminate use of antibiotics being driven by the Multisectoral National Action Plan of Antimicrobial Resistance. In addition we have included for the first time a bulletin on the findings from the Zambia’s Influenza Sentinel Surveillance program. This will from now on be a regular article.

The picture on our cover page emphasises the need for universal access to clean water. Take a moment and enjoy reading the June 2018 issue.
LIST OF REFERENCES


6. Global Task Force on Cholera Control. URL: WWW.Who.int/cholera/en