



South Asia Earthquake Health Situation Report # 23

16-19 November 2005

Health Cluster partners who wish to include information here should write to health@whopak.org copied to southasiaearthquake@who.int.

Highlights

- A suspected outbreak of measles in a camp for internally displaced in Garhi Habibullah, Balakot has been reported by International Medical Corps (IMC).
- Water and sanitation problems continue to be of great concern. The Government has officially mandated the MOH to review the situation in the camps and to organize action for its improvement.
- Mental health and psychological support services continue to be needed.
- A donor conference on 19 November in Islamabad gathered representatives from 58 countries, 30 international organizations and 15 financial institutions and generated approximately 5.4 billion dollars for the earthquake victims.
- The UN Secretary General and the President of Pakistan visited Muzaffarabad City and Thury Park IDP Camp. They spoke to IDP families and representatives of UN and aid agencies on disease outbreak risks and response.



Women filling their pots with water from a river in Chenari, Muzaffarabad District

Source: Dr. John Watson, WHO Pakistan

WHO response

Project 1: Revitalize the system for delivery of primary health care services including immunization, vitamin A supplementation, maternal, child and neonatal health services, as well as prevention and treatment of disabilities for earthquake affected populations in northern Pakistan.

Objectives: To assist the Government of Pakistan to revitalize / establish primary health care facilities and services in the affected areas to mitigate the impact on health of the earthquake and to ensure continuity of pre-existing program / services.

Bagh

- The collapse of the majority of health facilities in the Bagh area continues to be the overriding main challenge faced.
- The mass vaccination campaign against measles continues. 28 vaccination teams are carrying out activities in the rural areas.
- Polio vaccination has been included in the 15 days "crash programme", supported by the MOH, UNICEF and WHO. Eight teams have been sent to Dhir Kot, 10 teams to the fixed vaccination centres in Bagh and eight teams to Hawelli.
- Vaccination cards for the entire district have been made available.

Batagram

- WHO visited the field medical camp at Thakot run by a Cuban medical team. The doctors reported lack of tetanus vaccine, cold chain and difficulties in operating the intensive care unit (ICU) equipment due to electrical problems. The Executive District Officer (EDO) of Health said he would provide the Cuban team with tetanus (TT) vaccine in vaccine carriers on a daily basis.
- WHO also visited the field medical camp at Maira run by another Cuban medical team and organized jointly by the Pakistan Military, UNICEF, Save the Children and USAID. Similarly, it was not possible for the medical team to provide tetanus injections to injured patients in this camp due to the lack of vaccines and a cold chain.

Mansehra

- The total number of primary health care (PHC) facilities in Mansehra is 95, 48 of which are currently operational.

Muzaffarabad

- The MOH of AJK provided 138 medical teams who are currently vaccinating targeted populations. 14 mobile teams and four vaccination supervisors will work alongside the Pakistan Military in six inaccessible areas: Panchkot, Behari, Machiari, Said Pur, Rajpiyan and Sarli Sacha. Six vaccination centres will also be established in major camps with support from WHO and UNICEF.
- The total number of vaccinations against measles in Muzaffarabad District is currently 155,326. Of these, 106,364 persons were vaccinated with TT, 67,320 with Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV), 38,121 with diphtheria (DPT) and 39,700 with Vitamin A.

Project 2: Revitalize hospital care services (secondary level) in regions affected by the earthquake

Objectives: To ensure that basic comprehensive health services (system and structures) are available for affected populations include treatment of medical and surgical conditions, prevention and treatment of physical disabilities, essential and emergency obstetric care and newborn and child care. To ensure the availability of health human resources to provide medical services.

Bagh

- The District Health Officer has begun health system revitalization in Bagh to restore the provision of PHC, mental health care and Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) services. 32 health facilities (both BHUs and RHCs) have been identified.
- A referral system was established to ensure that patients in need of secondary or tertiary care receive adequate care. Over 12 agencies and NGOs are participating in this.

Project 3: Increase access to health care for affected communities

Objective: Re-establish through the provision of temporary or semi permanent health infrastructure and equipment, essential primary health care services in areas where health facilities are destroyed and/or to the new settlements.

- WHO has committed to revitalize 50 basic health units (BHUs) through provision of prefabs, equipment and drugs and by supporting staff. Location of these BHUs will be decided together with the MOH, district authorities and other agencies involved in primary health care.

Project 4: Emergency health relief operations including coordination and information management

Objectives: To establish and lead together with MOH a coordination mechanism whereby a central office and 5 field offices (Muzaffarabad, Mansehra, Bagh, Balakot and Rawalakot) are operational to assess and monitor the evolving health situation, coordinate health response, manage, analyse and disseminate essential health information, highlighting the health priorities.

Mansehra

- WHO and the EDO in Mansehra have decided that local authorities will appoint a medical officer as a facilitator to the WHO teams working in the area.

Muzaffarabad

- A PHC subcluster group meeting took place at the WHO Coordination Cell at AIMS Hospital with representatives from the MOH, the Muzaffarabad District Health Office, WHO, UNICEF and several NGOs. Discussion included identification of BHUs for revitalization, gaps in the availability of health personnel and methods to overcome constraints in communication.

Project 5: Disease Surveillance and Early Warning System

Objectives: To detect, investigate and respond to disease outbreaks in order to reduce morbidity and mortality due to epidemic prone diseases. Provide the operational and technical support to MOH to set up and sustain an early warning surveillance system in all the affected areas, as well the local capacity to enter, process and analyse the epidemiological data, and provide a prompt response to any outbreak.

Bagh

- During 12-18 November surveillance reports were collected from the Bagh District Hospital, NATO Hospital, AAI Clinic in Khorshadabad, MSF BHUs in Mallut, and the Birpani outpatient department (OPD). The total number of consultations is 2,562. No deaths were reported.
- One case of measles was reported from Khorshadabad and four cases of acute jaundice were reported from Birpani and Mallut. Two cases of acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) with severe dehydration were reported from Hali Ghel, south of Bagh Town. The MOH and WHO investigated the rumour of cholera which was confirmed negative.

Balakot

- A suspected outbreak of measles was reported from a camp in Garhi Habibullah, Balakot. During 17 to 19 November, the MOH-WHO Surveillance Team confirmed 23 measles cases and all of these were children aged 8 months to 10 years old.

Batagram

- 12 cases of AWD, eight cases acute respiratory infection, nine cases of scabies and one case of acute jaundice syndrome were reported from the District Headquarters Hospital. The AWD cases were predominantly of children below the age of two years and were treated by IV rehydration.

Muzaffarabad

- WHO continues to monitor the AWD situation at the Old University Camp. The total number of patients with AWD seen at this site in the past 40 days is 726. No deaths related to diarrhoea/dehydration are reported.
- 20 cases of high-grade fever were reported from Old University Camp. The cases are being investigated to determine the cause.
- In total, 12,438 consultations have been reported from Muzaffarabad during the period 12-18 November. Of these, 19% were acute respiratory tract infection, 10% injuries, 6% unexplained fevers and 4% acute diarrhea cases.

- A three month old child from Garhi Dopotta with suspected meningitis was referred to the MASH Hospital. CSF examination did not indicate meningitis and the patient was admitted for treatment.
- Only one case of AWD was reported from the Chenari ICRC Hospital.

Project 6: Environmental Health Response

Objectives: To improve the environmental health conditions of affected populations, and health facilities, and therefore reduce environment related diseases and deaths among the population. To provide technical advice, partnering on activities and strengthening the link between disease surveillance, focused environmental health interventions and outbreak prevention.

Bagh

- WHO visited the tented village in Ahmedabad consisting of 85 tents and comprising 450 people. Muslim Hands Relief manages the camp. It was noted that there is no solid waste disposal in the camp and there is a need for garbage containers. As well, the number of latrines is insufficient.
- After discussions with the DC Office in Bagh it was decided that from now on, medical and ordinary waste from hospitals and health facilities must be segregated and there must be an incinerator for medical waste. The health department is requested to follow the minimum requirements of HCW and waste collection points in hospitals and the City should be designated. Training of staff for solid waste management should also be organized.
- OCHA, UNEP and WHO will provide waste disposal guidelines.

Batagram

- WHO visited the field medical camp at Maira, which is organized by the Pakistani military. There are currently 6,000 people in the camp and will increase; Approximately 40 families arrive from higher elevations in the mountains daily. WHO noted that the hygiene and sanitation condition at the camp is poor since there is a lack of water and only nine latrines are functioning.

Muzaffarabad

- A WHO water and sanitation engineer continues to clean the Old University Camp and carry out health promotion sessions for women.
- An introductory health education session for women was arranged at the Old University Camp in collaboration with UNICEF, OXFAM and IR.

Project 7: Coordination, policy formulation and provision of mental health and psychosocial actions.

Objective: To provide access to emergency related mental health care all levels of care. To ensure interagency coordination and quality assurance in the area of mental health and psychological support.

- From 16 to 18 November a workshop was held at the NIH for master trainers with many participants from national and international organizations. Training modules and public education material discussed will be finalized following incorporation of material from national professionals. The national health plan is now based on a more in-depth integration of mental health into primary health care services.