



Highlights of diseases and event in February 2018

Situation of Chickenpox

According to the national R506 disease surveillance system dated 1 January to 12 February 2018, total 7,157 chickenpox cases were detected, with no fatalities. Most of the cases were small students. The age group with the highest number of cases were 10-14 (17.00%), 7-9 (16.71%) and 15-24 (15.73%). Most of them were Thai (98.5%). Provinces with the highest attack rate per 100,000 population included Phuket (29.28), Narathiwat (27.86), Pattani (23.47), Rayong (23.47) and Trat (22.90) Provinces.

From the databases that screen for outbreak news, 10 clusters of chickenpox were detected in 9 provinces, including Pathum Thani, Phichit, Khon Kaen, Mukdaharn, Prachinburi, Nakhon Phanom, Roi Et, Rayong and Tak Provinces. These clusters occurred in 1 child center, 8 primary schools and 1 prison. Five cases of chickenpox were confirmed from total 346 cases. No fatalities was identified from these events. Most of the cases were children and students who aged 3-12 years old. There were 95.66% of students, 1.73% of teachers and 2.60% of female prisoners. Cases were reported since November 2017.

Chickenpox outbreaks usually occur during January to May. The disease trend in January-February 2018 was similar to that of 2017 and the 5-year median (2013-2017). Nonetheless, the chickenpox clusters detected in the beginning of 2018 were higher than the whole period of the previous year.

Chickenpox is caused by Varicella zoster virus, and transmitted by coughing, sneezing, breathing or direct contact to the objects contaminated by the infected case. The infection usually recovers without treatment. However, severe complications might occur in some cases such as immuno-compromised or deficient people, pregnant women and the first infant born

from mothers with no immunity. The infection is found to be more severe in adults than children. The outbreak trends of the disease were reviewed using the chickenpox cases reported in 2013-2018. The reviewed results along with high number of clusters and cases reported in January-February 2018, more chickenpox cases might be reported until May 2018. In overall, the risk of infection in Thailand still poses to be low since most of cases are merely mild infections.

As recommendations to the public, sick people should not go to school or work until the blisters become dry and flattened. In order to prevent the infection, people should wash hands frequently, and avoid contact with the infected cases and using same water glass or spoon.

Source of information: Outbreak Verification Summary, 6th week during 11-17 February 2018.