

The Investigation of the First Autochthonous Chikungunya Outbreak in Taiwan, 2019

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Abstract

In 2019, an outbreak of chikungunya fever occurred in Zhonghe District of New Taipei City, Taiwan. Since the first case was confirmed on August 26, a total of 20 cases had been confirmed during the follow-up period. All cases had been to the neighboring area of Guoqiangling or the hiking trails to Yuantong Temple. The laboratory evidence revealed high sequence similarity in the structural gene between the first case and the imported cases from Burma in 2019. Thus, the New Taipei City Government blocked the entrance of 20 more trails in Niupu Mountain to restrict access. In view of the experiences of dengue fever prevention, mountainous area is a natural breeding sites for *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes, and it is hard to control the outbreak. The transmission of the chikungunya fever is fast, which can be transmitted to new hosts in only 2 days. Also, clinical differential diagnosis of chikungunya from dengue fever is difficult. Moreover, Taiwan never had autochthonous case before. Unfamiliarity of the associated symptoms led to challenges in disease prevention and control. We suggest that epidemic prevention members should enforce publicizing and communicating with healthcare providers and the public for better understanding and awareness of chikungunya fever.

Keywords: Chikungunya fever, outbreak, mountainous area

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