

Fear of Chikungunya Epidemic in Honduras



Tegucigalpa, January 21 (RHC-teleSUR) -- The chikungunya virus is rearing its head again in Central America, with an increase in cases in Honduras as reported by the Honduran General Hospital on Tuesday.

Chikungunya is a contagious disease transmitted through mosquitoes that has similar symptoms to malaria and dengue. The authorities of the principal public hospital fear an epidemic which they do not have the resources to deal with.

Roxana Araujo, Chief of Health Surveillance Department of Honduras' principal public hospital highlighted that they "only have the capacity to take 30 patients in the pediatric ward" and if the outbreak of chikungunya continues to increase, it could overload resources.

Currently in the capital of Tegucigalpa, there is an average of 5 cases daily of chikungunya. San Pedro Sula sees up to 7 or 8 a day. The patients usually come from the poor neighborhoods where there are no sewers or water services.

In 2014 the majority of chikungunya cases were reported in the village of San Francisco, 30 kilometers from the capital, and few cases in the capital.

This year there has already been several cases from the south, and from the bigger cities of San Pedro Sula and Puerto Cortes.

Doctors are worried because chikungunya has more intense symptoms than dengue. General Doctor Sonia Orellana explained that, "Chikungunya lasts longer than dengue, in these cases it lasts for 15 to 20 days and is mostly pain in the joints, in children and teenagers, in many cases they can't even walk, first they have a rash, then strong fever, and pain in their joints that debilitates the patients."

The Pan-American Health Organization has made several recommendations to the Honduran Government to declare a general epidemic and take actions, but there is still no official notification about an alert.

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