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Hwanghae^{황해도} and Gangwon Provinces^{강원도} Suffer from Typhoid and HFRS Epidemic

As the scarlet fever is widely spread across the country, various diseases are striking in different regions.

North Hamgyung Province and Ryanggang Province are suffering under Measles and Chicken pox, while Cholera, Typhoid, Paratyphoid and Hemorrhagic Fever with Renal Syndrome(HFRS) otherwise known as the 'Hanta Virus' are rapidly spreading in the Southern areas such as in the South Hwanghae^{황해남도} and Gangwon^{강원도} Province area that made the Ministry of Public Health nervous.

The government had formed medical quarantine groups to control the diseases, but without medications, there is not much of hope for control. It is noteworthy to find that the diseases are widely spread among the urban area rather than in the rural area, the diseases were transmitted when people consumed animals which were dead from the virus and finally the disease are most frequently found in the flood affected area.

Typhoid and the Paratyphoid are commonly known as the disease transmitted in Summer, but these diseases spread without any relations to seasonal temperature. Rather, it is known to be spreading more in Winter North Korea and the Cholera was to begin when the sea temperature goes up to 18 degrees Celsius and usually produced on the lower part of the river, where it meets with sea.

Hemorrhagic Fever with Renal Syndrome(HFRS) individuals may have flushing of the face, inflammation or redness of the eyes, or a rash. Later symptoms can include low blood pressure, acute shock, vascular leakage, and acute kidney failure, which can cause severe fluid overload. Severe loss of fluid could be fatal. Care includes careful management of the patient's fluid (hydration) and electrolyte (e.g., sodium, potassium, chloride) levels, maintenance of correct oxygen and blood pressure levels, and appropriate treatment of any secondary infections. Dialysis may be required to correct severe fluid overload. Intravenous Ribavirin, an antiviral drug, has been shown to decrease illness and death associated with HFRS. This would not be sufficient, since it usually carries malnutrition, vitamins and nutrient supplements are also required.

1 Out of 3 Scarlet Fever Infected Children Dies, Says the Toll

Scarlet Fever, Chicken pox and Measles are rampant in Hyesan^{혜산} in Ryanggang Province^{량강도} and Musan^{무산}, Hoeryung^{회령}, Chunjin^{청진} in North Hamgyung Province^{함경북도}. Children are the major victims of the diseases, and since their symptoms are alike, that is, with high fever, coughs, diarrhea and vomiting, parents would easily dismiss by mistaking the symptoms for a common cold. Children suffering of Scarlet Fever or Measles would suffer from high fever, diarrhea and vomiting and one in every three children are dying in these cases. The infants are the most vulnerable group with high mortality. In the case of the Hyesan, the military was mobilised in the area to block off all the roads in order to get control of the disease.

“Ice” (illicit drug) instead of Penicillin

As the Scarlet Fever is still widely spread, the common medications are in an absolute shortage. Since there are no medicines in hospitals, the patients would get the treatment from the physician's residence. As this is the private practice, they would have to pay 50-100won to as much as 1,000won for the treatment if not, any goods in exchange for treatment.

People who get the access to medications are considered fortunate, increasing number of people who cannot access the medications, they would use the 'Ice' (a kind of amphetamine) as a substitute for the medication. This obviously is raising many social issues, as this remedy is spreading on a word-of-mouth in markets that the 'ice' is good for treating the Scarlet Fever. The government announced that it is to tighten the drug control, but insufficient to put a stop on the trade. There are some who got better after using the substance, but the side-effects are fatal. Young children could be blinded or deafened and even lose life.

Enhancing the Crackdown on Drugs

After the Declaration on the Crackdown on the Dealings of the Illicit Substances (drugs), crackdown patrol was organised from the October 13th, 2006, as it was found recently.

The Crackdown Patrol was to eliminate the producers and dealers of the 'Ice' and Opium nation-wide. After inspecting the prosecutor's office, national security, and police stations, the patrol found over 150personnels connected to the dealings of substances in the city of Pyongyang, North and South Hamgyung Provinces and North and South Pyongan Provinces just in the month of October. The arrested people were expelled from the party or discharged from the post or the likes according to legal due procedure. They were found to have helping the smuggling, direct dealings and have been bribed from 1million won (North Korean) to 5million won.

Substance trade is considered as easy way to earn a large amount of money on the border area and since the opium and the 'Ice' is used as the substitute for pain-reliever, due to absolute shortage of medicine, transporting these substances across the country is quite easy.

Demand for the substances are high among the Chinese as there are tight control over substance dealings and abuses and economical. The illicit substance trade is another headache of the North Korean government.