

## Dengue Fever Fact Sheet

### The International School of Macao WHRST (What, How, Symptoms, Risk Minimization, Treatment)

#### What

The global incidence of dengue has grown dramatically in recent decades and dengue is now the most important viral disease transmitted by mosquitoes afflicting humans in a world context. Some 2.5 billion people – two fifths of the world's population – are now at risk from dengue. The World Health Organisation currently estimates there may be 50 million dengue infections worldwide every year.

The disease is now endemic in more than 100 countries in Africa, the Americas, the Eastern Mediterranean, South-east Asia and the Western Pacific. South-east Asia and the Western Pacific are the most seriously affected. Before 1970 only nine countries had experienced DHF epidemics, a number that had increased more than four-fold by 1995.

#### How

Dengue viruses are transmitted to humans through the bites of infective female *Aedes* mosquitoes, most commonly *Aedes aegypti*, known as the 'dengue mosquito', but sometimes by other mosquito species. Dengue cannot be spread from human to human directly.

#### Symptoms

Dengue fever has many symptoms, and people usually experience a combination of symptoms. Common symptoms of dengue fever are:

- sudden fever and extreme tiredness
- intense headache (especially behind the eyes)
- muscle and joint pain
- loss of appetite
- vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain
- a metallic taste in the mouth
- red or macular (small, flat red spots) rash occurs in half of cases
- minor bleeding from nose and gums
- with enlargement of the liver, and in severe cases circulatory failure.

#### Risk minimization.

- § Change the water in vases and bowls on alternate days
- § Remove water from flower pot plates on alternate days
- § Turn over all water storage containers

- § Cover bamboo pole holders when not in use.
- § Clear blockages and put BTI insecticide in roof gutters monthly.

### **Treatment**

- § **There is no treatment available; management of the symptoms is possible.**
- § **General recommendations include controlling fever and pain with paracetamol rather than aspirin (aspirin may promote bleeding), and increasing fluid intake. Aspirin should not be given to children under 12 years of age unless specifically recommended by a doctor.**