



**WHO IRAQ**  
**BI-WEEKLY BULLETIN**  
**MAY 14<sup>TH</sup> - 31<sup>ST</sup> 2006**

The World Health Organization works in partnership with the Ministry of Health (MoH) in fulfilling the Ministry's vision of providing Iraq with accessible, affordable, available, safe, and comprehensive quality health services. The seven main areas of work which encompass all WHO activities are: (1) Access to Quality Health Services; (2) Health Policy, Planning and Sustainable Development; (3) Human Resource Development; (4) Mother, Child and Reproductive Health; (5) Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases; (6) Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases; and (7) Social Determinants of Health. This bulletin has used these seven areas of work (which are consistent with the Ministry's strategy and the UN Health Cluster's strategic outcomes) as a framework to present the activities undertaken in the reporting period. For additional information on WHO activities in Iraq, feel free consult our website below.

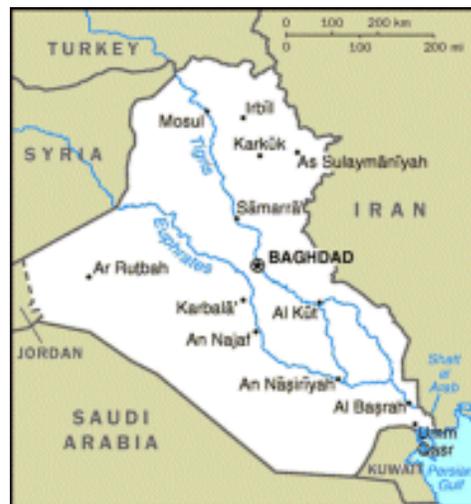
**ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH SERVICES**

-With EC funding from the UNDG ITF project for the re-establishment of the National Drug Quality Control Laboratory, WHO supported a workshop organized by MoH from 28 May to 1 June 2006 on Guidelines for Laboratory Design: Health and Safety Considerations. A total of 21 multidisciplinary professionals including architects, civil and mechanical engineers, specialists in different aspects of clinical, environment, research and teaching laboratories from the Ministry of Health (15), the Ministry of Higher Education (3) and Ministry of Environment (3) participated. (see pictures 1, 2)

Workshop aims to help participants to: (a) acquire a solid understanding of the requirements and user demands of laboratory construction, renovation, modification and extension and (b) to apply theoretical situations to real-world situations through guided tours of different laboratories in Jordan. The opening ceremony was attended by Dr. Naeema Al-Gasseer, WHO Representative for Iraq who took the opportunity to share her views on the importance of integrated health systems, coordination and team work. The Deputy Minister of Health, Mr. Amar Safar, also addressed the participants on the final day of the workshop.

Participants were also given the opportunity to acquire first hand experience in project formulation for lab construction or renovation. Field visits were made to the Pharmaceutical Research Unit of the Jordan Royal Scientific Society in Amman and to several modern labs at the King Abdullah University Hospital at the Jordan University of Sciences and Technology in Irbid.

-Ongoing provision of medical oxygen for hospitals in the Ninawa governorate. Total supply for April: 4562 oxygen cylinders at a total cost of US\$ 27372



(Pic1) Field visit at the Pharmaceutical Research Unit



(Pic2) Closing ceremony



## HEALTH POLICY, PLANNING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### Erbil

-Ongoing rehabilitation of 12 PHCs in Suleymania. More than 83% of the work has been completed.

-Final approval was obtained to construct 2 emergency units in both Dohuk and Erbil costing US\$ 100,000 each.

## HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

### Erbil

-WHO OIC Erbil participated in the second regional meeting on Emergency, Cairo, Egypt 13-16 May, 2006. (see picture 3)

## MOTHER CHILD AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

-WR, Dr. Naeema Al Gasseer, UN Health Cluster Task Manager, chaired a series of joint meetings with UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> May 2006. Objectives of the meetings were to: discuss the current activities and work of each agency in the area of Emergency Obstetric Care (EMOC), agree on comprehensive plan to address EMOC in Iraq and decide on the roles. A consensus by all stakeholders was reached whereby work will follow an integrated approach on EOC by UN Health Cluster using the MCH/RH strategy as a background to support implementation of activities. Determining components and allocation of funds is the next step. Lead agency on EMOC will be UNFPA, with WHO working on policy strategy and capacity building and UNICEF on social mobilization and IEC.

-A working session conducted on 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> May 2006 in the WHO office was attended by 3 members of the steering committee from MoH with WHO technical support in order to finalize the IFHS and CIDI questionnaire and survey timeline.

-Dr. Amar Al-Safar, Iraq Deputy Minister for Donor's Affairs chaired a meeting with UN agencies: WB, UNICEF, UNFPA and WHO, to discuss proposals submitted by WB and UNFPA on EMOC. Key recommendations: All agencies to develop one integrated proposal on EMOC, identification of the role of each agency and what activities they want to implement based on need assessment and MoH priorities.

-WHO/UNICEF supported MoH in the implementation of the second round of Polio National Immunization Days. More than 97% of the targeted 4.8 million under 5 children were reached via house-to-house visits and vaccinated with 2 doses of Oral Poliomyelitis vaccines. Overall objective of this campaign is to maintain a Polio free status in Iraq (see picture 4)

-Preparations are underway to conduct the Iraq Family Health Survey. (see picture 5)



(Pic3) Second regional meeting on emergency



(Pic4) Second round of NIDs



(Pic5) Workshop on Iraq Family Health Survey, Training of Trainers, Amman, Jordan 29 April - 16 May 2006



-Preparations are underway for final approval to rehabilitate the Influenza Isolation Center in Erbil.

-Polio free status maintained

### PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

#### Avian Influenza

- To date, only two cases of human H5N1 have been confirmed in Iraq.
- Samples of three suspected cases were received in Amman and sent to NAMRU3/Cairo for lab investigation.
- WHO began the process of procuring additional PPEs which, according to need, will be distributed to the governorates.
- WHO Iraq continues to provide daily regional and global updates to all DoHs - updated WHO health education materials were also provided.

Further information on the avian influenza situation is available on:

- [www.emro.who.int/iraq](http://www.emro.who.int/iraq)
- [www.who.int/csr/disease/avian\\_influenza/en/index](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/index)

#### Cholera

-WHO Iraq continues to provide technical and logistic support to DoH Basra in preparation for any cholera outbreaks taking into consideration the seasonality of the disease. Support included workshops for doctors, lab and paramedical staff, provision of IV fluids and technical support to ensure implementation of interventions such as training, health education activities, improved surveillance and availability of IV fluids, lab reagents, etc.

#### Malaria and Leishmania

-Malaria and Leishmania spraying campaigns have been completed in several governorates. (see picture 6)

-No cases of Malaria have been reported in Iraq during the first four months of 2006 whereas five cases were reported during the first four months of 2005. Such success was due to comprehensive preventive and control activities implemented by MoH in conjunction with WHO's continuous technical and logistic support. Activities included: early diagnosis and prompt treatment, spraying, fogging, distribution of bed nets, entomological surveys, health education, etc. (see picture 7)

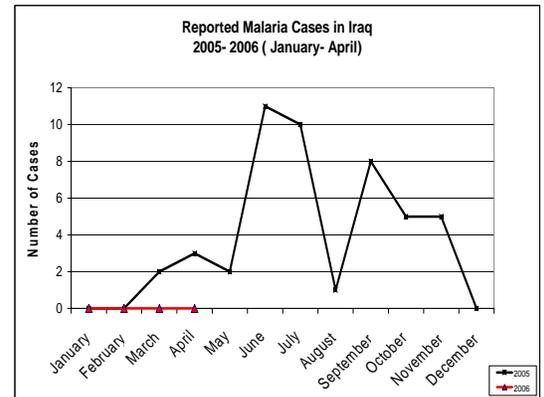
-On 29 May - 1 June 2006 Cairo, Egypt, 4 Iraqi officials from TB, Malaria and HIV/AIDS programs, participated in the Inter Country workshop on Proposal Development for the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Main objectives of the workshop were to brief countries on required writing guidelines for round 6 proposals and to train participants in developing country proposals.

-Implementation of different activities under communicable diseases surveillance and outbreak response, TB, HIV/AIDS, Schistosomiasis, etc, have been initiated. Cost of the activities is covered against the regular budget according to MoH-WHO work plan.

-No reported cases of cholera or outbreak of other communicable diseases.



(Pic6) Leishmania spraying in Basra



(Pic7) Reported Malaria cases in Iraq



-Ongoing surveillance of avian influenza, measles, and other potential outbreak diseases through zero weekly reporting.

-Surveillance for Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) and measles were carried out in the main health facilities. Surveillance included routine zero reporting, active case detection, notification and follow up.

-Twenty-four AFP cases were reported in Iraq, bringing the total number of AFP cases to 197 for 2006.

-The weekly polio fax issue no. 18 and polio situation update were circulated to surveillance officers and staff.

-Outdoor malaria insecticide residual spraying began in Zakho/Dohuk on May 6 and will continue till May 30 with teams using KO3 as insecticide. With the technical and logistic support of WHO, spraying activities are also going on in Erbil and Suleymania.

-Out of 37 suspect measles cases 14 were confirmed as measles. Twelve confirmed measles cases were reported from Wasit governorate. WHO and MoH are investigating the cause of the outbreak in Wasit.

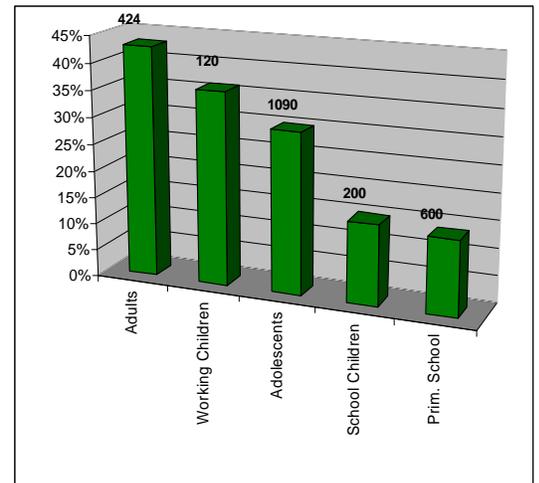
## PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

-Populations living in conflict situations are prone to higher mental health needs, and may as a result of their environment demonstrate various behavioral symptoms, distress and/or more specific psychiatric syndromes like depression and post-traumatic stress disorders.

From January 2006 to March 2006, a series of research studies were completed by psychiatrists in Iraq with WHO providing technical assistance in research methodology. Following the workshop, all 15 psychiatrists were given technical and financial support by WHO to complete the identified projects in the workshop. Funding for the research workshops and research projects was provided from the UNDG Trust Fund with support of the Japanese government.

Five of the studies focused on the prevalence of psychiatric problems in primary school children, adolescents and working children. One study identified the prevalence of attention deficit hyperactivity disorders in school children while another focused on the prevalence of mental disorders in adults. (see picture 8)

The studies indicate high rates of mental disorders. These findings are in line with those from other countries in conflict situations like Afghanistan, Sudan and Somalia There is therefore an urgent need to address these needs by appropriate mental health care programs at the community level.



(Pic8)Prevalence of mental disorders



## SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

-WHO in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment completed a six-day training on "Environmental Public Awareness" in Amman, Jordan. The training was conducted by the Jordan Environment Society and was attended by 16 professionals from Iraq's Ministry of Environment. The importance of public awareness programs in environmental management and sustainable development was the training's core focus. (see picture 9)

-WHO supported a three-day training course on ION-Chromatograph in Amman, Jordan for 2 participants from Iraq's Ministry of Environment Water Quality Control Laboratory.

-On the 31<sup>st</sup> of May, WHO national staff participated in the "Conference on Promoting Non-Violence and Networking Peace Initiatives in Iraq". The conference was organized by the NGO Coordination Committee for Iraq.

The conference followed a 2-day workshop and forum that allowed participants to debate and voice out their concerns on the subject. The workshop provided participants with the opportunity to initiate anti-violence activities. Presentations were made on: (a) recommendations of the five working groups of the workshop (b) the initiatives of local NGOs to stop violence, and, (c) the UNAMI initiative of the "Baghdad Peace Accord".

The conference, which was facilitated by a conflict resolution expert, was attended by representatives of various national and international NGOs working in Iraq, staff from UN organizations, members of parliament and the media.



(Pic9)Participants at the Environmental Public Awareness training