

Dengue fever, Angola

Since March 2013, Angola has been experiencing a dengue outbreak in Luanda Province. The capital city and Angola's biggest seaport, Luanda has also been affected and numerous travellers have acquired dengue fever whilst visiting the city. On 1 April 2013, local health authorities in Luanda reported six cases of dengue fever acquired in the city, with subsequent reports of travel-related dengue acquired in Angola. As of 7 June, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report the situation as an epidemic with over 300 dengue cases having been confirmed, of which 90 have been travellers.

Previously, dengue has been reported sporadically from Angola, with the last outbreak of dengue reported in Luanda in 1980.

The Centre for Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases (NICD-NHLS) has confirmed four cases of dengue in South Africans returning from travel to Angola since the start of the outbreak to date. In addition, an Angolan man and a foreign national working in Angola were diagnosed and treated for dengue in South Africa.

A 43-year-old male from Western Cape Province but working in Angola was confirmed dengue positive by IgM ELISA on 17 April 2013, as was reported in the April 2013 issue of the NICD Communicable Diseases Communiqué.

A 57-year-old male from Gauteng Province who works in Luanda was diagnosed with dengue type 1 virus by RT-PCR and molecular sequencing on 7 May 2013. The case was described in the May 2013 issue of the NICD Communicable Diseases Communiqué.

A 33-year-old South African male visited his brother in Angola for three weeks and returned to South Africa on 28 April 2013. He had onset of flu-like symptoms a day after his return to his farm in Eastern Cape Province. He presented on 1 May to a Bloemfontein hospital with pyrexia and inflamed throat. His brother had been diagnosed with dengue and presented with similar symptoms. A malaria screen was done on the patient and results

were negative. The NICD-NHLS confirmed the diagnosis of dengue by RT-PCR on 2 May.

A 29-year-old male from Gauteng Province presented to a Pretoria hospital with complaints of headache, nausea, vomiting, fever, and swollen lymph nodes. Skin rash was absent. He reported recent travel to Angola. The NICD confirmed the diagnosis of dengue by IgM ELISA on 6 May. No PCR testing was performed on this patient.

A 65-year-old Angolan patient was admitted on 13 May 2013 with a history of febrile illness for about a week and was treated in a Johannesburg hospital. He presented with fever and petechial rash on his legs. Laboratory findings showed a low platelet count, which increased progressively on corticosteroid treatment. The patient recovered well. The sample submitted for the patient was found positive by IgM ELISA and negative by RT-PCR at the NICD.

Dengue should be suspected in Febrile travellers from Angola. Two of the patients described above were still viraemic after returning to SA as shown by PCR testing, and although mosquito activity in winter is low in SA, there should be awareness of possible transmission from dengue patients through the bite of mosquitoes for the duration of viraemia.

The CDC, the World Health Organization, the Angolan Ministry of Health, and the European Union are working together to respond to the outbreak. The NICD-NHLS continues to investigate any laboratory submissions for travellers from Angola.