

Daunting Dengue: An Awareness Intervention

Studio 1: Project Proposal

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A Proposal by:

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INTRODUCTION

Dengue is a mosquito-borne infection that causes a severe flu-like illness, and sometimes a potentially lethal complication called dengue haemorrhagic fever. Global incidence of dengue has grown dramatically in recent decades. About two fifths of the world's population are now at risk.

There is no specific treatment for dengue, but appropriate medical care frequently saves the lives of patients with the more serious dengue haemorrhagic fever. The only way to prevent dengue virus transmission is to combat the disease-carrying mosquitoes.

The incidence of dengue has grown dramatically around the world in recent decades. Some 2.5 billion people – two fifths of the world's population – are now at risk from dengue. WHO currently estimates there may be 50 million dengue infections worldwide every year.

The spread of dengue is attributed to expanding geographic distribution of the four dengue viruses and their mosquito vectors, the most important of which is the predominantly urban species *Aedes aegypti*. A rapid rise in urban mosquito populations is bringing ever greater numbers of people into contact with this vector, especially in areas that are favourable for mosquito breeding, e.g. where household water storage is common and where solid waste disposal services are inadequate.

The findings of the AMC's July 2010 survey have come as a health alarm for the civic body and residents alike. It states that the breeding of the *Aedes* mosquito, responsible for causing dengue, has increased by three times, as compared to July 2009. The AMC survey had detected 0.35 *Aedes* mosquitoes per room in the city in July 2009, which has increased to 0.98 in July 2010. Also, the presence of Malaria-causing mosquitoes has gone down from 0.54 per room in 2009, to 0.38 in 2010. The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC)'s recent survey has discovered that the number of dengue-causing mosquitoes per room in the city has tripled.

NEED // RELEVANCE:

The dengue fever is increasing among the urban population and it is mostly dangerous in the monsoon months of August, September and October in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India.

The need for an intervention and an effective communication program to create awareness about this disease, its causes, symptoms, transmission and prevention is a necessity and should be planned in advance instead of communicating only during the sensitive months when the disease is at its peak.

Dengue has no vaccine or a specific cure, hence the need to spread awareness about this disease becomes of key importance. Also in closed communities like flat residencies, boarding schools and hostels the disease spreads around rapidly due to lack of proper awareness and sensitivity towards the issue. Hence the need for an awareness intervention becomes important.

PROBLEM STATEMENT:

The disease Dengue has an ubiquitous influence during the monsoon months in India. Yet there is lack of awareness and understanding of the causes and prevention measures of the disease amidst the masses except that it is transmitted by mosquitoes. Dengue has no vaccine but tests like PCR and ELISA are used for its identification whose procedures and test centers people are unaware of. Information regarding the disease is available over the net and in hospitals but it lacks interest and an attention seeking representation.

SCOPE OF PROJECT:

The project hopes to develop an effective communication program or an awareness intervention about the daunting disease amidst single individuals, residential college students, people in hostels or boarding schools and working professionals who remain mostly in transit from one region to another. The project hopes to build awareness about the disease and ways of preventing it along with immediate attention to test centers and labs in fixed areas.

TARGET AUDIENCE:

Primary: Single Individuals, bachelors, people in rented flats, residential students of high schools and colleges, hostels and working professionals living in transit.

Secondary: Doctors at Hospitals, Principals and Teachers of High School, Faculty and students of Colleges.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Building an effective communication program or awareness intervention in the health sector.

Identifying biases or myths associated with the disease.

Understanding focus groups and their lifestyle patterns.

Designing communication collaterals for health.

Understanding and inter connecting information systems.

Information graphics and effective visual representation of statistics and data.

Amalgamating traditional and new medias of communication.

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