

Risk of Hantavirus Introduction and Establishment in Nepal

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Letter to the Editor

Hanta Virus (HV) is one of the major emerging and reemerging zoonotic public health problems globally. These viruses are also known as rodent-borne viruses (zoonotic diseases) of the family *Bunyaviridae* that have been identified as etiological agents of two human diseases, Hemorrhagic Fever with Renal Syndrome (HFRS) and Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS) [1,2]. Hanta virus first outbreak was reported during the Korean War from 1950 to 1953, where more than 3000 United Nations troops fell ill with Korean hemorrhagic fever caused by HFRS. HV outbreak was also occurred in the four corners region of the United States in 1993 and which is now referred as Hanta Virus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS) [1,3,4]. Now a days, owing to improved diagnostic facilities and surveillance efforts the presences of Hanta viruses are increasingly being reported in humans and rodents from Far East Russia, China, and South Korea [5-9].

According to Nepal government data, Ministry of labour and employment, more than 5000 Nepalese migrant workers are employed in South Korea annually through the Employment Permit System (EPS) [10]. Till to date, no laboratory confirmed cases of HV have been reported from Nepalese migrant workers who return back to Nepal, however, deaths attributed to pneumonia due to unspecified organism remains highest in Nepal [11]. HPS and pneumonia share similar clinical presentations, while physicians do not consider HV infection in their differential diagnosis in Nepal.

Thus, to prevent possible introduction and establishment of hanta virus infection in Nepal, Nepal government should provide specific training program for laboratory personnel and require effective surveillance for rapid and early detection of hanta virus infection in Nepal.

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