

Respiratory Diseases

Information for VAG Leaders and health committees

VAG LEADER ACTIONS

- Have meetings with your VAG about Respiratory Diseases (RD's). Use this fact sheet.
- Prepare each VAG meeting properly. At the start of each fact sheet there is a list of preparations needed. Make sure you carry out these preparations.
- In other VAG meetings you can discuss other topics in the following order preferred by your VAG.
- If you wish, use the '*key information*' in a VAG meeting to discuss all important issues regarding this topic once again. If possible copy this fact sheet and give a copy to each family in your VAG.
- Write down all actions (eg. to prevent RD's through energy saving stoves, to insist that parents provide their children with proper clothing) proposed by the VAG members during the discussions and agree how they will be followed up and who will be responsible.
- Keep in touch with the health committees to know whether the situation has improved.

HEALTH COMMITTEE ACTIONS

- Get data from the first aid, dispensary or nearby hospital to what extent RD's are a problem and for advise
- If necessary develop plans for the community
- Implement the plan together with VAG's, village leaders, etc.
- Evaluate the success of the project and further action needed.

Preparation for VAG's

- Read this fact sheet; make sure you understand the question and the information.
- Ask the health committee where pain-relieving drugs are available and how much they cost.

Prevention and treatment

Ask the people the following questions:

What are RD's?

- RD's are infections in the nose, mouth, throat or lungs. RD's have names as colds, influenza, asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia, and tuberculosis (TB). Children are very susceptible for getting RD's.
- RD's mostly occur during the rainy season.

How can one get RD's?

- Respiratory infections are almost always caused by a virus and are spread by the air.
- Smoking or living in a place where it is smoky. Women spend a lot of time above the stove which produces a lot of smoke.
- Air pollution by cars, trucks and motors.
- Malnutrition: an unbalanced diet can make children susceptible to diseases.
- Lack of proper clothing.
- Worms.

What is a virus?

- A virus means that one person can also contaminate the other. For example if one child has a respiratory disease it can easily give this disease to another child by coughing in or near the face of the other child. An infected child can also give the disease to other children by giving them a hand or touching food which other children will eat.
- Since RD's are spread by viruses, it is very important to pay attention to personal and environmental hygiene because this helps prevent transmission of respiratory diseases (see also the fact sheet HYGIENE).

Show the drawing and discuss the DOs and DON'Ts.

DOs

- Wash hands before eating something.
- Try to eat balanced meals, especially in the rainy season.
- Use protection clothes when spraying the crops.
- Prevent environmental pollution, for instance when burning bushes or other things
- Wear enough clothes in the cold season so as to prevent loss of heat.
- If available, cover your mouth with a tissue when you cough, sneeze, or laugh. Dispose of the tissue after use. Or cough or sneeze in the fold of your arm and trap the germs in the washable fabric of your clothes
Always wash and dry your hands thoroughly afterwards.
- Air out your room often. RD's spreads in small closed spaces where air doesn't move.



DON'Ts

- Do not cough near someone else.
- Do not create too much smoke from cooking, there must be enough air in the house or other cooking stoves must be used.



Treatment

- When you are just snivelling, and not feverish, the symptoms will go away after a rest for a few days.
- When you really feel sick or feverish or the symptoms don't go away visit a doctor or nurse. He/she can prescribe medicines.

Discussion

Ask the community if they know any traditional healing measures. Which measures are being used now? Are these effective?

Key information

What are RD's?

- RD's are infections in the nose, mouth, throat or lungs. RD's have names as colds, influenza, asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia, and tuberculosis (TB). There is a separate fact sheet on TB. Children are very susceptible for getting RD's.
- RD's mostly occur during the rainy season. If this is so maybe this subject can be best discussed during the rainy season when people are most confronted with the infection.

What are the causes of RD's?

- Respiratory infections are almost always caused by a virus and are spread by the air.
- Smoking or living in a place where it is smoky. Women spend a lot of time above the stove which produces a lot of smoke.
- Air pollution by cars, trucks and motors.
- Malnutrition: an unbalanced diet can make children susceptible to diseases.
- Lack of proper clothing.
- Worms.

A virus means that one person can also contaminate the other. For example if one child has a respiratory disease it can easily give this disease to another child by coughing in or near the face of the other child. An infected child can also give the disease to other children by giving them a hand or touching food which other children will eat.



What are the symptoms of RD's?

- Coughing
- Snivelling/Running nose
- Pain in the ear and/or breast
- Difficulty with breathing
- Producing a squeaking noise.

Why respond to the symptoms

- Respiratory diseases are an important cause of death all over the world.
- People who suffer from these diseases are hugely affected and cannot participate in important daily activities like work, school and sports.
- Treating respiratory diseases will improve the living standard because people will be able to do more and be more productive when they do not suffer from RD's.

What to do.

- Make sure the community understands the sources of respiratory diseases
- List the problems that crops up from respiratory diseases in your community
- Talk to the Village elders, family leaders on the need for the education to prevent respiratory diseases and measures that can prevent them
- Plan for actions, e.g. build energy saving stoves, start de-worming procedures, let children wear proper clothing etc.

Concluding Notes

- Remind the members about the action points they have decided on
- Ask if there are any further questions
- Agree on the date, time, place and topic of the next meeting
- Close the meeting.