

TOGO: MENINGITIS

Information Bulletin No 1

*Special Request for CHF 157,000 to assist
1997*

7 March

1,200 beneficiaries for two months

The Context

In the three Northern regions of Togo, the annual outbreak of meningitis has affected more people than usual and taken a higher death toll. Up to February 20, 263 patients had died, out of a total number of 1,737 infected, representing a mortality rate of over 15%. The Togolese Red Cross (TRCS) is assisting the authorities in treating patients and conducting health education campaigns for the population in the affected regions. All health structures of TRCS in the Savanes, Kara and Centrale regions are involved in this programme.

TRCS will purchase medicine for cerebral-spinal meningitis (Tifomycine) as well as disposable syringes and needles in Togo. These will be distributed to their dispensaries in Boadé, Nano, Loko (Savanes), Lama-Boo, Lassa-Houdé (Kara), Aléhéridé, Kaniamboua, Wassarabo Kpassouadé, Sabarigandé and Tchoidé (Centrale). Small hospital tents will be put up for the patients in order to avoid the disease spreading to patients in the dispensaries. The medical staff and volunteers will conduct health education campaigns in the areas around the dispensaries. The operation is planned to last two months, starting this month. A vaccination campaign as follow-up is suggested for September/October in order to avoid new outbreaks.

Latest events

The government has mobilised local and regional staff and hospitals to treat as many patients as possible. Assistance was provided by WHO for vaccination campaigns. The Health Minister asked TRCS to assist in the medical care, as government facilities are insufficient.

TRCS also mobilised the staff and volunteers in the villages, where it has dispensaries and health posts for identification of patients, health education and additional medical care. The Federation agreed to fund the purchase of medicines, syringes, needles and hospital tents.

MSF is assisting the government hospital in Dapaong with tents and medical services, and, alongside Association pour l'Aide à la Médecine Préventive (AMP), is involved in medical care and preventive programmes in the districts of Tandjoaré and Oti, just South of Dapaong. All agencies are working in close co-operation with local health authorities in the respective areas.

The Needs to be met

Immediate needs include 10,000 doses of Tifomycin, 10,000 disposable syringes and needles as well as 30 hospital tents (25 square metres). From September 1997 onwards, TRCS plans to join the government in a mass vaccination campaign in the three most affected regions, and also in the neighbouring regions in order to prevent the spread of meningitis in the years to come.

The funds requested can be broken down as follows:

Medical:

10,000 dosis of Tifomycin)	23,000
10,000 syringes and needles	4,000
200 camp beds	31,000
50 stretchers	6,000
30 hospital tents (25 m2) with ground sheet	44,000
Local personnel (30 volunteers)	11,000

Transport and Storage:

Transport of hospital tents	14,000
Diesel, maintenance, drivers for two vehicles	9,000
Administration TRCS	7,000

<u>sub total</u>	149,000
Secretariat Support	8,000

<u>Total</u>	157,000
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TRCS already has an extensive dispensary programme and good relations with local authorities. The International Federation does not have a delegation in Togo, but its representative in Ghana visits on a regular basis. The Regional Health Delegate of the Delegation in Abidjan will also co-operate with TRCS as needed.

TRCS will monitor the programme and will conduct the final evaluation. The Regional Delegation in Abidjan is ready to assist with the latter.

Conclusion

The structures and the experience of TRCS in the health sector guarantee a high quality intervention for the population threatened by cerebral-spinal meningitis. Sister Societies and donors are asked to respond quickly in order to curb the epidemic as soon as possible.

Bekele Geleta
Director
Africa Department

Barbara Petersen
Desk Officer
West and Central Africa

