

Officials: Deadly Nipah virus has not spread in south India

May 25 2018



In this Thursday, May 24, 2018, photo, paramedics wear protective suits as a precautionary measure against the Nipah virus as they bury Valachekutti Mosa's body, died of the same virus, in Kozhikode, in the southern Indian state of Kerala. More than 10 people have died of Nipah since an outbreak began earlier this month in Kerala, health officials say. There is no vaccine for the virus, which can cause raging fevers, convulsions and vomiting, and kills up to 75 percent of people who come down with it. (AP Photo/K.Shijith)

An outbreak of a deadly virus has not spread beyond two areas in south

India, officials said, but they have issued a series of warnings to people living in the stricken towns.

A total of 12 people have died of Nipah virus since the outbreak began a few weeks ago in the state of Kerala, an unidentified senior Health Ministry official told the Press Trust of India news agency. Another 40 people with Nipah symptoms, which can include high fever, vomiting and convulsions, are being treated in area hospitals.

There is no vaccine for Nipah, and no treatment beyond supportive care to make patients comfortable. The virus kills up to 75 percent of those infected.

While officials believe this outbreak began with someone infected somehow by a fruit bat, the ministry official said every subsequent infection came from human-to-human contact, sometimes passing to relatives or medical workers caring for the sick. About 100 families where someone has had contact with infected people are being carefully monitored.

On Thursday, medical workers in white plastic suits and breathing masks buried the latest victim in the town of Kozhikode, placing his plastic-wrapped corpse in the red earth. Many of the handful of mourners who turned out for the burial were also wearing breathing masks.



In this Thursday, May 24, 2018, photo, relatives and friends wear masks as a precautionary measure against the Nipah virus as they pray after the burial of Valachekutti Mosa's body, died of the same virus, in Kozhikode, in the southern Indian state of Kerala. More than 10 people have died of Nipah since an outbreak began earlier this month in Kerala, health officials say. There is no vaccine for the virus, which can cause raging fevers, convulsions and vomiting, and kills up to 75 percent of people who come down with it. ((AP Photo/K.Shijith)

Meanwhile, officials have issued a set of warnings to two parts of Kerala, including telling the public to avoid consuming partially eaten fruit from date palms and raw liquor made from dates. People have also been told to avoid abandoned wells.

Fruit bats eat dates from palm trees, and sometimes nest in wells.

The central government has dispatched teams from the National Centre

for Disease Control to the area to monitor the outbreak.



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Citation: Officials: Deadly Nipah virus has not spread in south India (2018, May 25) retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-05-deadly-nipah-virus-south-india.html>

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