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Thailand, Viet Nam and Indonesia to collaborate on major study of sepsis, a deadly medical condition



BANGKOK – Citing a need to respond to important infectious disease threats in South East Asia, public health officials from Thailand, Viet Nam and Indonesia agreed today to actively collaborate on a new study on sepsis, an major cause of death due to infectious diseases in the region.

The extent of sepsis in South East Asia is currently unknown but health care experts suspect that it accounts for a substantial number of deaths there. Preliminary results from a currently unpublished Thai study show that one in 6 patients who presented with sepsis died, a figure much higher than expected.

"We need to know the extent of sepsis, its causes and outcomes, so we can treat it more effectively and thereby save thousands of lives in South East Asia," said Dr Nguyen Tran Hien, Director of the National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology, Ministry of Health, Viet Nam, and Chair of the Governing Board of SEAICRN, speaking today at SEAICRN's annual meeting.

The sepsis study, which began late 2013 in Thailand and in early 2014 in Viet Nam, and which will start in Indonesia in late 2014, is supported by the Ministries of Health in Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam, and by SEAICRN's global partners, which include the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, the Wellcome Trust and the World Health Organization (WHO).

"I urge that the Ministry of Health in all South East Asia countries actively participate in this important sepsis study," said Dr Muhamad Karyana, Chairman of INA-RESPOND, Center for Applied Health Technology and Clinical Epidemiology, Ministry of Health, Indonesia. "It is

crucial that policy makers and leading research institutes collaborate and conduct high-quality research to provide evidence-based information to improve health care in our region."

Conducted by the South East Asia Infectious Disease Clinical Research Network (SEAICRN), the sepsis study seeks to identify the causes and outcomes of sepsis, improve its treatment, and help public health authorities and medical researchers across South East Asia better respond to other potentially deadly public health threats in South East Asia as new infectious diseases emerge.

"New and emerging infectious diseases are another threat to human health in Thailand and South East Asia, and researchers and policy makers need to be prepared to act promptly when they emerge," said Dr Supamit Chunsuttiwat, Senior Medical Officer, Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health, Thailand.

"We learned during the 2005 H5N1 avian influenza outbreak that waiting for an outbreak to start makes it difficult to perform the best and most informative research," said Dr Direk Limmathurotsakul, Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Tropical Medicine, Mahidol University and Director of SEAICRN. "Initiating and collaborating on large multi-national clinical studies like this one to define the causes, management and outcome of sepsis will allow us to detect new emerging infectious diseases in South East Asia and plan a coordinated, more effective response."

Founded in 2005 in response to growing concerns about the H5N1 avian influenza pandemic, SEAICRN is a collaborative partnership of national public health agencies and medical researchers ideally positioned to swiftly initiate research in response to infectious disease threats. SEAICRN also aims to increase scientific knowledge and directly contribute to improved clinical management of infectious diseases, such as sepsis, leptospirosis, dengue infection, and hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD) caused by Enterovirus 71 (EV71).

Participating SEAICRN institutes in Thailand include Siriraj Hospital, the Faculty of Tropical Medicine and Mahidol-Oxford Tropical Medicine Research Unit (MORU) at Mahidol University, Queen Sirikit National Institute of Child Health (Bangkok), Chiangrai Prachanukroh Hospital (Chiangrai), and Sappasithiprasong Hospital (Ubon Rathchathani).

In South East Asia, SEAICRN participating institutes include Indonesia's Cipto Mangunkusumo Hospital (Jakarta), Dr Sardjito Hospital (Vogyakarta) and Dr Wahidin Soedirohusodo Hospital (Makassar); and Viet Nam's Children Hospital 1 (Ho Chi Minh City), Children Hospital 2 (Ho Chi Minh City), Hospital for Tropical Diseases (Ho Chi Minh City), National Hospital for Pediatrics (Hanoi), National Hospital for Tropical Diseases (Hanoi), and Hue Central Hospital (Hue).

SEAICRN's global partners who provide financial, scientific, operational and administrative support include the University of Oxford and the Wellcome Trust from the United Kingdom; the USA's National Institutes of Health's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIH/NIAID); the World Health Organization (WHO), Mahidol-Oxford Tropical Medicine Research Unit (MORU), Oxford Universities Clinical Research Unit (OUCRU) from Viet Nam, INA Respond, FHI 360 and Social & Scientific Systems, Inc. — ANN/VNS

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