

Myanmar Acute Watery Diarrhea / Cholera Outbreak

External Situation Report

3rd edition (2024), Published on 11 September 2024
WHO Health Emergencies Programme
WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia

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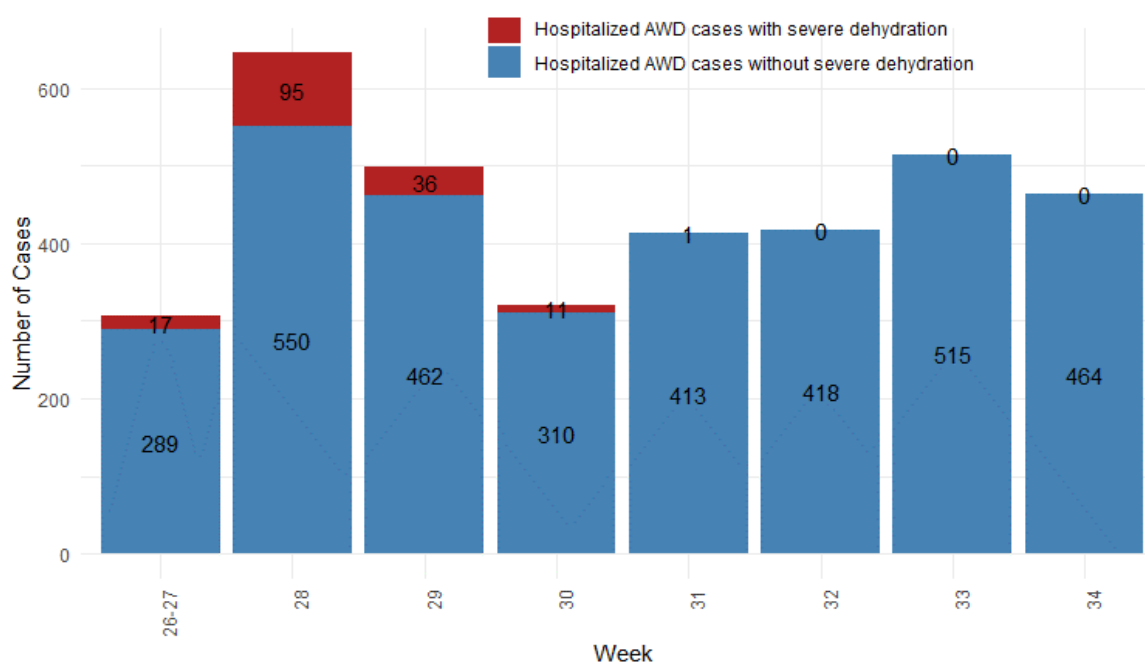
This report summarizes the situation as of 9 September 2024.

Situation Overview

Yangon

- According to the ministerial authorities for health:
 - As of 25 August 2024, a total of 3 421 hospitalized cases of acute watery diarrhea (AWD) including 160 cases with severe dehydration were reported in Yangon Region, since 24 June 2024.
 - Since week 31 (starting on 28 July 2024) more than 400 hospitalized AWD cases have been reported every week, with a total of 464 hospitalized AWD cases reported in the week 34 (19 – 25 August 2024). No new cases with severe dehydration were reported after 4 August 2024.

Figure 1. Trend of AWD cases in Yangon region, Myanmar from 24 June to 25 August 2024



Source: The ministerial authorities for health

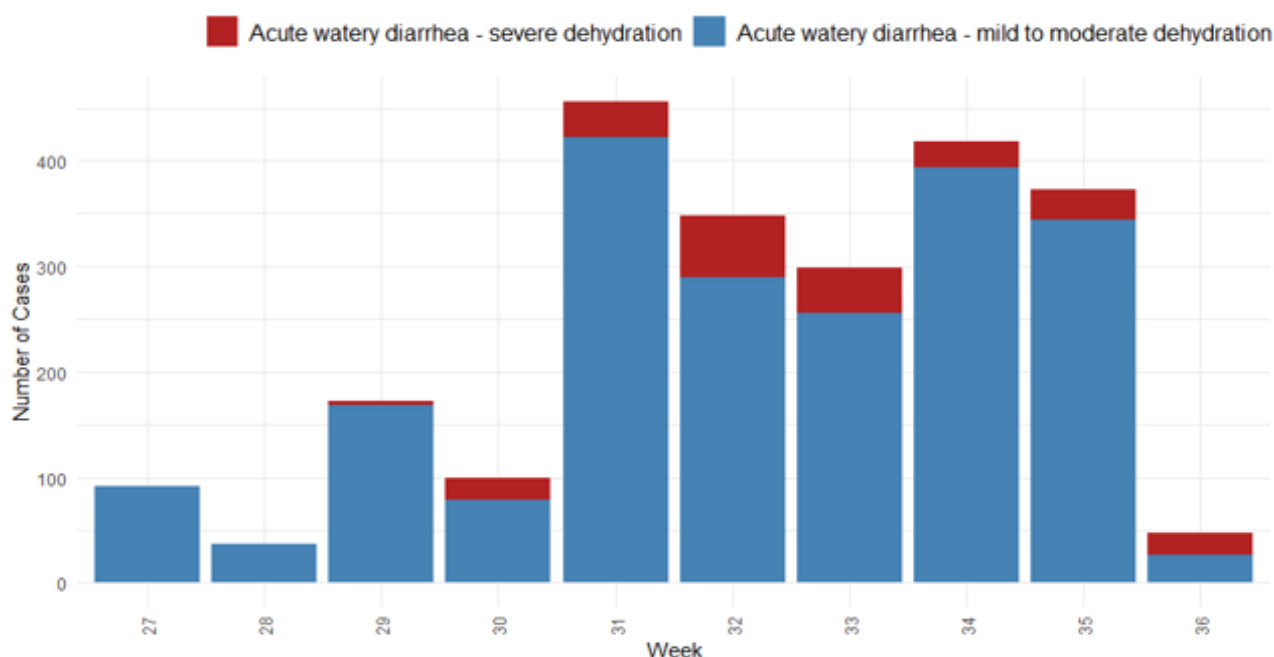
- Overall situation in Yangon
 - According to the ministerial authorities, 154 severe cases and 15 deaths were reported among 3 421 cases between 24 June and 8 August (causes of 15 deaths were uncertain and may not be linked to severe AWD/cholera), while there were no reports of severe case and death after 8 August.
 - Clinicians at hospitals also suggested that patients are no longer presenting with severe dehydration and/or shock in the recent weeks, while severe cases were more common in early period of the outbreak.

- At the same time, information from open sources suggested an increase of cases is again observed in some townships, including some cases with severe outcomes.
- As such it is important for all the stakeholders to continue making efforts to interrupt transmission and reduce morbidity and mortality.

Rakhine

- According to the ministerial authorities for health, from 4 to 25 August 2024, a total of 235 hospitalized AWD cases including 63 cases with severe dehydration were reported in Sittwe, Rakhine.
- According to the early warning and response systems (EWARS) supported by the Health Cluster in Myanmar:
 - In the epidemiological week 36 (1 – 7 September 2024), a total of 47 AWD cases were recorded, including 20 cases with severe dehydration. This is 87% decrease compared the week 35 (25 – 31 August 2024). Prior to this decline, approximately 300 or more AWD cases had been reported for five consecutive weeks (week 31 to week 35, or 28 July – 3 August 2024).
 - However, the number of the AWD cases with severe dehydration remains stable, raging between 20 to 30 cases in the past three weeks (week 34 to 36).
 - Out of 48 AWD cases with severe dehydration in the weeks 35 and 36 (25 August - 7 September), six cases (12.5%) were children under the age of five, and 42 cases were aged 5 years and older.
 - There was no decrease in the overall number of medical consultations. The reason for the sudden decline in AWD cases in the week 36 is uncertain.

Figure 2. Weekly Trend of AWD cases in Rakhine state, Myanmar from 30 June to 7 September 2024



Source: Health Cluster in Myanmar

Public Health Response

Vaccination

- A total of 2,451,847 doses of oral cholera vaccine (OCV) to implement a reactive vaccination campaign in 34 townships in Yangon region have been approved by the International Coordinating Group (ICG) on Vaccine Provision ¹.
- Planning for OCV vaccination campaign is underway. It is proposed that the campaign will be extended from seven days (which was the original plan) to 12 days, to ensure adequate time for fixed-post and door-to-door mopping up activities.
- GAVI will fund the OCV vaccination campaign costs (Myanmar being eligible to be GAVI fund recipient). WHO and UNICEF will receive the funds to support the delivery of the campaign, including for trainings, supervision and evaluation meetings..

Planning and coordination

- WHO continued coordination efforts with the ministerial authorities for health and health partners to optimize the ongoing AWD/cholera control efforts in Yangon and prevent potential spill over to other neighboring States/ Regions.
- WHO and UNICEF held two meetings with the ministerial authorities for health, during which the joint plan of action for AWD/cholera response, including adjustments on the plan to allow for operational feasibility, were presented. WHO and UNICEF are waiting for agreement from the ministerial authorities for health.

Surveillance and laboratory

- The ministerial authorities for health have resumed publication of weekly AWD data on their website on 9 August 2024, although the data after 25 August have not yet published.
- The ministerial authorities for health reported that active case surveillance is conducted in several townships in Yangon region ².
- WHO is facilitating international procurement of additional laboratory supplies for cholera culture and sensitivity tests.

Risk communication and community engagement (RCCE)

- In collaboration with UNICEF, WHO is preparing information products related to OCV campaign in a “Questions and Answers” format to facilitate vaccine uptake towards the planned targets.
- WHO continues sharing the [cholera RCCE materials](#) to stakeholders, targeting communities in Yangon through various communication channels and platforms.

Case management and infection, prevention and control (IPC)

- WHO Myanmar team conducted a field visit to Yangon General Hospital on 4 September 2024 to review and discuss the case management of AWD patients. The team had a meeting with senior officials from Yangon General Hospital including lead clinical and laboratory officials. The cases are declining at the hospitals, while high workload continues pose challenges.

¹ [International Coordinating Group \(ICG\) on Vaccine Provision](#)

² [Ministerial authorities for health – 26 August 2024](#)

Supply of health commodities

- WHO is facilitating international procurement of health commodities. Three cargos containing health commodities worth USD150,000 have reached Yangon in August, which include 100,000 oral rehydration salt (ORS), five cholera investigation kits, case management supplies (including zinc and ringer lactate) sufficient to cover up 10,000 cases.
- The ministerial authorities for health reported that bleaching powder, water purification tablets and doxycycline were supplied ².

Challenges

- Lack of access to the real-time disaggregated data for the ongoing cholera situation has been a challenge for effective planning of response actions and mobilization of resources. WHO has requested the Ministerial authorities to continue communicating detailed public health information on AWD and cholera to WHO as per the requirements under the International Health Regulations (2005).
- The reactive OCV campaign can support the containment efforts; however, effective and efficient public health measures are required in the longer-term, along with more sustained investments, both in health and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).
- AWD/cholera cases continue to be reported, indicating that the transmission chain remains active. This highlights the need to further intensify community engagement efforts to stop the transmission.

Way forward

- WHO will work with relevant partners on preparation and implementation of OCV campaign; capacity building of health care workers and volunteers; field visits to key public hospitals in Yangon; and strengthening RCCE efforts to engage communities.