

Understanding MEASLES



The story unfolded initially as an apparent mysterious disease that claimed 15 lives from a Batik Orang Asli community of Kuala Koh, Gua Musang in the hinterland of Kelantan.



WHY ARE SOME PEOPLE MORE PRONE TO MEASLES INFECTION?

In this case, there were many within this cluster of people not immune to Measles. They might not previously had the illness, survived and developed a resistance to; or had not acquired the

immunity (able to gain resistance) to the illness.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Zulkifly Ahmad said among the factors that contributed to the spread of measles within the community's Batik tribe in Kampung Kuala Koh was the low coverage of MMR (Measles-Mumps-Rubella) immunisation among them. (BERNAMA) 18 June 2019



BERNAMA

18 June 2019

While 61.5 percent of the tribe received the first dose of the MMR vaccine, only 30 percent had their second dose.

The low immunised population means that once the virus made contact with the community, it would easily implant itself and then spread to the next person and so on. This describes a situation of "low herd immunity".

WHY ARE SOME PEOPLE MORE VULNERABLE TO MEASLES?

Many think Measles as a mild illness - certainly something that would not result in death. This is unfortunately not always the case. Initially there was a lot of speculation as to what caused the death of the 15 Orang Asli deaths. While there might be contributing factors, but the main cause have been identified as MEASLES.



Kanak-kanak Orang Asli mangsa ke-15 meninggal

GAMBAR fail, seorang kanak-kanak Orang Asli Kampung Kuala Koh, Gua Musang, Nasri Rosli, berusia tiga tahun yang dijangkiti radang paru-paru sejak sembilan hari lalu telah meninggal dunia di Pediatrik Intensif Care Unit (PICU), Hospital Raja Perempuan Zainab II (HRPZ II) Kota Bharu jam 6.45 petang semalam. - Foto Zaman Huri Isa

Measles is one of the most contagious of all infectious diseases; up to 9 out of 10 susceptible persons with close contact to a measles patient will develop measles.



When investigation were systematically done the Yang Berhormat Minister of Health finally declared

Disease affecting Kampung Kuala Koh is measles

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MEASLES is a very infectious airborne viral disease - the virus spreading easily in droplets when infected people cough and sneeze. Measles can also spread easily if anyone comes into direct contact with phlegm or mucus from infected people.

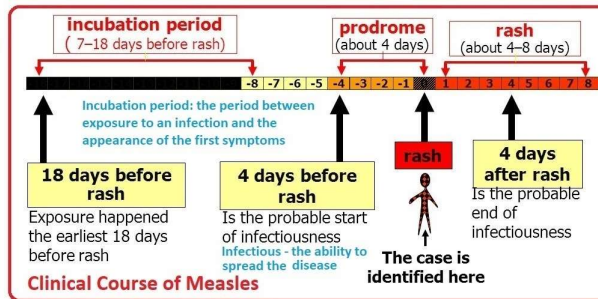


Initial symptoms typically include high fever, often greater than 40 °C (104 °F), cough, runny nose, and inflamed eyes. Small white spots known as Koplik's spots may form inside the mouth two or three days after the start of symptoms. A red, flat rash which usually starts on the face and then spreads to the rest of the body typically begins three to five days after the start of symptoms.



Clinically, the **rash** is the most important point of reference. Fever and other general symptoms would not make it easy for anyone to distinguish from the usual "flu" while Koplik's spot could easily be missed.

The rash might be itchy and it would be wise to avoid scratching. There is yet no specific medication to kill the virus. Treatment is mainly symptomatic/supportive.



Complications of MEASLES



- Pneumonia
- Severe diarrhoea
- Encephalitis
- Blindness
- Ear Infection

Measles can get complicated particularly in the very young and the very old; and the malnourished. Contamination of the river, for instance, might not directly kill but that would lead to lower fish population and thus lower catch that would in turn mean lower protein intake. In young developing children, this undernutrition could undermine their actual growth and resistance to infection.

In this current scenerio, we must together ensure better vaccination coverage and improved nutrition to encourage individual resistance; keep off outsiders who might carry the virus, and improved their ecosystem. **Unfortunate as it may seems, the incident is naturally a good argument for the ongoing VACCINATION Program.**



We owe it to our young to ensure they are well-protected.