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| 5938 | 21.07.2020 | 22.07.2020 | Assam | www.thehindu.com/English https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/assam-mosquitoes-kill-manu-amid-flood-covid-19-crisis/article32152448.ece |
| Title: | Assam: Mosquitoes kill 23 amid flood, COVID-19 crisis | | | |
| Action By CSU, IDSP -NCDC | Information communicated to SSU-Assam | | | |

Malaria, Japanese encephalitis cases 21% less than in 2019 but under-reporting and under-treatment not ruled out.

About 21.5% fewer people have died of vector-borne diseases caused by mosquito bites during the current season in Assam compared to 2019.

Officials said there are multiple reasons, including under-reporting of cases for the “seemingly encouraging” figure compared to other concurrent killers — floods and landslides that have claimed 113 human lives, and **coronavirus (COVID-19)** that accounted for 58 deaths till Tuesday morning.

Japanese encephalitis (JE) and malaria kill scores in Assam every year, specifically during the “flood season” that usually starts in May and can stretch to October.

The State has reported a total of 23 deaths due to vector-borne diseases till July 20 this year. JE claimed 21 lives while two people died of malaria.

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Disclaimer:- This is a media alert subject to verification.

**Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), National Centre for Disease Control,
Ministry Of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India**

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JE had killed 104 people and malaria three during the same period in 2019. These two diseases had killed a total of 164 people last year, data with the State Health and Family Welfare Department and National Health Mission (NHM) show.

“Compared to 873 JE and malaria cases reported in 2019, we have 360 cases besides 18 dengue cases (44 in 2019) so far. There are three principal reasons for this,” S. Lakshmanan, the NHM Mission Director for the State told *The Hindu*.

“First, the actual incidence is low. Secondly, there have been positive and negative impacts of lockdown and community restrictions. Positive because the spread is not happening and negative because of under-reporting and under-treatment of JE and malaria,” he added.

The third reason was the difficulty faced by people in going out to get checked in hospitals, and engagement of “malaria workers in COVID-19 duties”.

NHM officials also did not rule out the possibility of sanitisation and hygiene in malaria and JE-prone areas for the drop in the number of cases of vector-borne diseases.

“The culex mosquito that causes JE bites around dawn and dusk. People have not been venturing out due to various restrictions, which is not exposing them to mosquitoes, while the emphasis on sanitation may have had an impact on the mosquitoes,” Mr. Lakshmanan said.

The government had prior to the monsoon mapped the JE and malaria areas across the State and had on May 7 launched the Assam Community Surveillance programme through grassroots health workers. The programme entailed screening people for traces of diseases associated with the pre-monsoon and monsoonal seasons.

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