

CONDUCT ON CAMPUS AMIDST CHOLERA OUTBREAK

BACKGROUND

Malawi has registered high cholera cases in the past few months although the outbreak has been with us since the dry season. The country continues to register high cholera cases on a daily basis with tens of deaths. Schools in the cities of Blantyre and Lilongwe delayed opening for two weeks as authorities tried to address the situation.

As MUST is opening for the second semester of the 2021/22 and first semester of the 2022/23 academic years, cholera remains a huge challenge, especially in environments like ours where many people share facilities such as toilets and others. This calls for strict adherence of high levels of hygiene and other preventive measures on campus.

As a matter of guidance, the MUST Response Committee for Emerging Infectious Diseases (MRCEID) at its recent meeting recommended the following preventive measures for all staff members and students. These measures are guided by the national cholera management standard operating procedures which will also be shared with both staff and students through email and other media platforms.

HYGIENE

Washing hands with soap before eating

Washing or heating food before eating

Washing hands with soap after visiting the toilet]]

Always use a toilet and use it properly

Proper disposal of waste

Observing general sanitation in all areas and utilizing disposal bins and hand washing stations provided.

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VACCINATION

All staff are encouraged to get a Cholera vaccine at their nearest health facilitate

All students should ensure they are vaccinated at their nearest health facilitate before reporting on campus

MUST is not currently designated as a Cholera vaccine site

HANDLING OF CASES

There will be a designated place within the clinic where cholera or suspected cases will be managed.

All staff and students are encouraged to report to the MUST clinic if they notice any symptoms of cholera. Students can also report to the Dean of Students Affairs or MSRC Social Welfare Directors.

CHOLERA SYMPTOMS

- Acute watery diarrhea
- Profuse vomiting
- Profuse 'rice water' stools (common)
- No fever
- No abdominal cramps
- Leg cramps (common)
- Dehydration including loss of body weight, renal failure and death

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CHOLERA TRANSMISSION

Cholera is transmitted via faecal-oral route as follows:

- Contaminated drinking water
- Unprotected shallow wells, surface water. (*Vibrio cholerae* can live for years in some aquatic environments)
- When contaminated utensils/hands come in contact with stored water
- Through contaminated food during and after preparation
- Contaminated food stuff stored and served at room temperature or inadequately heated
- Cooked food left standing and moist at room temperature is an excellent medium for *Vibrio*
- Through contaminated fruits and vegetables when grown at or near ground level
- Fertilized with human waste
- Irrigated with water containing human waste
- Freshened with contaminated water
- Eaten raw, not thoroughly washed

MEASURES TAKEN BY MUST ON CASE MANAGEMENT

- Establish a comprehensive treatment unit within the MUST clinic precincts
- Carry out screening using a checklist – all staff and students are supposed to comply
- Ensure that water supply on campus is readily available and enough backup kept

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- Carry out surveillance, case identification and management, prevention and community engagement, and outreach together with Thyolo District Hospital
- MUST has also put in place mechanisms for regular monitoring and evaluation on hygiene on campus

University Registrar

23rd January, 2022

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