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Bad dengue test kits damaging to public health

Richard Philip

The lack of proper diagnostic capabilities and the prevalence of inaccurate dengue test kits may have hindered dengue control at a time when the number of dengue cases is rapidly rising, public health experts fear.

"I think we are constantly underestimating how much dengue there is out there because most countries don't have proper tools or the capacity to do the diagnosis," said Dr. Rosanna W. Peeling, a research coordinator with the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR), based at the WHO in Geneva, Switzerland.

Many dengue diagnostic kits are being sold and used without evidence of their effectiveness because most countries do not have standardized regulations to examine the performance of diagnostic tests before approval, said Peeling, who is managing a project by WHO/TDR and the Pediatric Dengue Vaccine Initiative (PDVI) aimed at evaluating dengue tests and providing data to countries on the quality of those tests. This is being



Authorities may be underestimating the prevalence of dengue due to poor quality test kits.

done to ensure that countries are using the best tests for patient care, surveillance and outbreak investigations and dengue vaccine trials, Peeling added.

"I think that once the word gets out that somebody is looking at the quality of these

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Rising prevalence of NAFLD in Asia

Naomi Rodrig

Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) – a condition affecting up to 40 percent of the population in Western industrialized countries – is increasing in prevalence across Asia and especially in China.

The prevalence of NAFLD has increased in parallel with regional trends in obesity, diabetes and metabolic syndrome. Large, community-based studies estimate the prevalence in Asia at 12 to 24 percent, depending on age, gender, ethnicity and locality, according to Dr. Jian-Gao Fan of the Shanghai Jiaotong School of Medicine, China. While among Caucasians NAFLD affects mainly overweight and obese in-

dividuals, it has become common among Asians with normal body weight.

"NAFLD has recently emerged as a new health problem in once-lean Chinese, where traditionally clinicians have dealt with a formidable burden of chronic hepatitis B," said Fan. "Fatty liver is increasingly prevalent in China and is more often linked to obesity than to alcoholism. With the rising obesity pandemic, the prevalence of NAFLD has nearly doubled in the past decade, reaching 15 percent in the more affluent regions of China."

According to Fan, the full range of histological manifestations of NAFLD was

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While NAFLD tends to affect overweight and obese Caucasians, it has become common among Asians with normal body weight.

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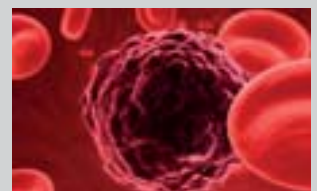
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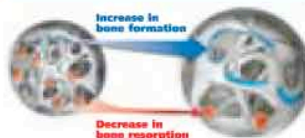
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