BACTERIAL DISEASE

LEPTOSPIROSIS 3RD DEADLIEST IN MALAYSIA

It is most prevalent in rainy seasons, with Melaka as a hotspot, says expert

Universiti Malaya, leptospirosis was prevalent during the wet rainy season and accounted for 12,325 cases with 338 deaths over an eight-year period from 2004.

“The risk of contracting leptospirosis is higher during this stage as urine from rodents like rats is easily transmitted through the flowing water.”

She said statistics provided by the Health Ministry found that the ratio of male victims compared with females was 4:1 in the 30 to 39 age bracket with the fatality rate recorded at 2.7 per cent, or 338 deaths, over an eight-year period from 2004.

In total, there were 12,325 cases reported for leptospirosis during that period, with Melaka being a hotspot for the disease,” she said in her presidential address at the opening of the 56th Annual Scientific Conference of the Malaysian Society of Parasitology and Tropical Medicine at Hotel Istana here yesterday.

The event was held in conjunction with the Third Asian Simulidae Symposium themed “Neglected, Tropical and Vector borne Diseases: The Evolution of One Health from Challenges to Solutions”.

Dr Siti said municipal service workers were found to be at the greatest risk of contracting leptospirosis in view of their job nature, especially in handling garbage and other unhygienic chores.

“The two pathogenic serovars most commonly found in rodents are Leptospira interrogans serovar Bataviae and Leptospira borgpetersenii serovar Javanica. “Other than rats, swines and dogs are also carriers of the disease. In swines and dogs, Leptospira interrogans serovar Cantaculata and Leptospira interrogans serovar Pomona are prevalent.”

She added that leptospirosis was found pathogenic in nature common in the environment and that the isolates were resistant to common antibiotics.

In conjunction with the conference, Dr Siti witnessed a Memorandum of Understanding signing ceremony involving Malaysia, Indonesia and Taiwan for a collaboration on research and education on parasitology and tropical medicine.

Malaysian Society of Parasitology and Tropical Medicine president Associate Professor Dr Siti Nusheena Mohd Zain (centre) at the Memorandum of Understanding signing ceremony involving Malaysia, Indonesia and Taiwan for collaboration on research and education on parasitology and tropical medicine in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. With her are Indonesian Parasitic Disease Control Association president Dr Rita Kusriastuti (left) and Taiwan Society of Parasitology president Professor Dr Petrus Tang. PIC COURTESY OF MALAYSIAN SOCIETY OF PARASITOLOGY AND TROPICAL MEDICINE.