

21. Africa – Diseases

Malaria

= transmitted by mosquitoes. The parasite infect blood cells => very common cause of infant deaths in Africa (cca 1 mil./year). Malaria reduce physical and mental energy.

Risks of infection are greatest in riverside towns and during rainy season. There are various mutations of malaria disease => Europeans depending on a particular pill may move to a place where the malarial parasite is resistant to that particular drug => *death*.

= occurs in *tropical and subtropical African regions*.

- In Africa there are 350-500 million cases of malaria each year and about 1.5-3 million deaths, mainly of children in *sub-Saharan Africa*.

= one of the most important diseases in tropical countries and its diffusion has been enhanced by factors:

- *population growth*
- *urbanization*
- *migrations*
- *refugees*
- *conflicts*

Yellow fever

=> monkeys = hosts, but yellow fever can be transmitted from apes to humans very frequently by mosquitoes.

= initially appeared in Africa and then it was brought to America at the time of the slave trade.

- *Symptoms*: fever, headache, jaundice, degeneration of kidneys and heart
- *Countermeasures*: drainage of mosquito breeding grounds and quarantine of ships arriving from infected areas.

No treatment is known for yellow fever, except of vaccine increasing the immunity to the disease.

AIDS

= acquired immune deficiency syndrome ⇔ spread by disposable syringes used repeatedly, without sterilisation => transmission from one patient to another (e.g. lorry drivers, soldiers, prostitutes). Bad social conditions have accelerated the diffusion of AIDS.

AIDS destroys the body's natural resistance to diseases

2000: 25.3 million people in sub-Saharan Africa were estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS = >8% of all adults.

Approximately 70% of the adults and 80% of the children living with HIV worldwide reside in Africa, and 75% of the more than 20 million people who have died from AIDS since the start of the pandemic were Africans.

Mostly in *Cameroon, Ghana, and RSA + Zimbabwe* (1/5 or a 1/4 of the population is infected).

Sleeping sickness

=> *tsetse-fly* = occupying semi-arid and in dense populated regions.

= endemic (sometimes epidemic), chronic disease occurring in *C and W Africa*.

- *Symptoms*: nervous system is attacked, mood changes, sleepiness, lack of appetite, death.

WHO = World Health Organisation

Keywords:

malaria, yellow fever, AIDS, sleeping sickness, WHO, vaccine, jaundice, kidneys, riverside towns