

‘One Health’ gains momentum in Central Asia and South Caucasus

Astana, Kazakhstan, 15-16 November 2018

The OIE and WHO, working closely with the competent authorities in the countries of Central Asia and South Caucasus, identified three priority zoonotic diseases of paramount importance for human and animal health in the region: **brucellosis, rabies and echinococcosis**.

Last month, representatives of the animal and human health sectors of nine invited countries, as well as representatives of international organisations and OIE and WHO experts, came together in Astana, Kazakhstan, to increase countries’ awareness of ‘One Health’ global activities and discuss barriers faced at the national level in controlling zoonotic diseases.

“A clear promotion of the ‘One Health’ concept at the national level, when combined with significant and sustained political support should enable the prevention of diseases, at the human–animal–ecosystem interface, that have a major impact on public health. However, an insufficiency or complete absence of such cooperation between Veterinary Services and Public Health Services is unfortunately still too frequent.”

	National Strategy/ Programme/Action Plan on		
	Echinococcosis	Brucellosis	Rabies
Armenia	-	+	-
Azerbaijan			+
Georgia	+	+	
Kazakhstan	+	+	+
Kyrgyzstan	+	+	+
Russia	+	+	+
Turkmenistan			+
Uzbekistan		+	

Efforts to control zoonotic diseases in the region are evidenced in different countries rules and procedures. For example, it is reflected in the *Rules for the prevention and control of infectious diseases common to humans and animals: “Brucellosis”, Instructions on measures for the prevention and elimination of animal diseases by helminth infections*, etc.

Moreover, **inter-sectoral collaboration** is reported at different levels, through the Inter-Agency Council, working groups, etc., however quantifying the efficacy of such collaboration, and the openness and transparency involved in such work is difficult. Despite the existence of a large regulatory and legal framework for inter-sectoral collaboration and communication between services and departments, work at the local level to control zoonotic diseases is not well-coordinated. For example, national coordination between the veterinary and public health sectors on echinococcosis in Armenia is still reported as being non-existent.

The countries of this region have similar challenges in the main:

- ✓ weakness in surveillance, both active and passive
- ✓ non-compliance with rules of livestock management
- ✓ poor quality of registration and collection of case information
- ✓ lack of practical training and prerequisite knowledge for diagnosis, prevention and treatment
- ✓ inadequate work to raise public awareness on the diseases, etc.

As a result of the two days of discussions, and exchanges of experiences, views and knowledge, the following recommendations were made:

- to strengthen political commitment to accelerate the prevention and control of zoonoses
- to foster inter-sectoral collaboration: countries are encouraged to conduct IHR/PVS¹ national bridging workshops
- to identify operational research priorities on the epidemiological situation, and prevention and control of zoonoses, in collaboration with the OIE and WHO
- to develop joint (human/animal) strategies and action plans on priority zoonoses, using the One Health approach
- to develop and/or update national guidance and regulations, in accordance with OIE and WHO guidance.

The OIE and WHO will continue facilitating and supporting this initiative and promote an inter-sectoral cooperation through different activities on the national, sub-regional and regional levels.



The participants in these discussions were specialists from the public and animal health sectors of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, representatives of international organisations, as well as international experts from the OIE and WHO Collaborating Centres.

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¹ IHR/PVS: Internal Health Regulation/Performance of the Veterinary Services (a workshop format that enables countries to further explore possible overlapping areas addressed in their PVS and IHR capacity frameworks and develop, where relevant, appropriate bridges to facilitate coordination).