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Human Diseases in Cambodia: A Growing Problem

Imagine not having access to health care. In the United States we take for granted the fact that healthcare is readily available to Americans. The doctor can be as close to them as 1 to 35 miles from their home. Getting help in Cambodia is much harder. 80% of Cambodians do not have any access at all to any type of medical care. Due to the poor water sanitation and very little medical diseases are uncontrolled and spread very quickly. Cambodia is a part of the southwestern part of the Indochina peninsula, only 20 percent of the land is used for agricultural usage. There are thousands of Cambodians that are affected by different diseases each and every year. I know that we all feel bad and try to help anyone that is in pain or suffering. But there is something that we need to do about it. The United States supports Cambodia to reduce the prevalence of HIV/ AIDS and improve nutrition. On average an American spends about \$10,000 each year on healthcare. Meanwhile, Cambodia is one of the poorest nations in the world. If they do find medical assistance and decide to go the majority will have to pay out-of-pocket. For an American we would have a very hard time in Cambodia getting the medical assistants they need. We can better understand the spectrum of Cambodian health care by doing so.

One of the serious problems in Cambodia is Malaria. More than 300 million episodes of acute illness and 1 million deaths each year. According to Dr. Helen Webberley, "Malaria is a life threatening blood disease caused by parasites transmitted to humans through the bite of the anopheles mosquito." Those parasites are multiplied in the human's liver before infecting and destroying red blood cells. Malaria is found everywhere in Cambodia, especially rural areas that are wet and humid. This proves to be a major problem and is extremely hard to stop once the spread has started.

As far as healthcare in Cambodia the hospital are not required to follow international standards which means some of the cases that come in they will be transferred to go somewhere else. There is a doctor 1 in every 5,000 people. Prescriptions do not exist in Cambodia so if you need medication you can get it over the counter. Most hospitals in Cambodia do not accept insurance so they have to pay for the treatments that they have done. A consultation which is a bed for the night, cost of medication and equipment is used can cost just US\$100 in Phnom Penh. Polyclinique Aurora is a clinic in Phnom Penh, Cambodia if you are tight on money and you need to find a treatment is the recommended place to go. According to Google Maps, The approximate distance from the Polyclinique Aurora to the Royal Rattanak Hospital is about 20 miles. The hospital is going to be more expensive than the clinic but they have more to offer to the patients. If the patient is very sick they may be suggested to go to the Royal Angkor International Hospital because they are staffed with Thailand and Cambodian workers to give them more knowledge how to cure things. A drive from Royal Rattanak Hospital to Royal Angkor International Hospital is a 5 hour drive. "The hospitals in Cambodia are like a stolen car stripped down its parts." Which results in unsanitary conditions.

"The main form of treatment for Malaria in Cambodia since 2008 has been, the drug piperazine combined with Artemisinin." stated in an article from Fox News Health. This combination is one of the few treatments still effective against multi-drug resistant Malaria. Many antimalarial medicines that are

sold in Cambodia are fake. A study by Dr. Lancet found that a third of antimalarial drugs sold in Cambodia contain no active ingredient. For an easier understanding it would be like taking a sugar pill.

The definition of dengue fever from the Merriam-Webster dictionary is: a severe, painful and viral disease transmitted by the Aedes mosquito. Mild dengue fever causes high fever, rash, muscle and joint pain. This occurs when it rains a lot. There is usually an annual outbreak from May to June. Dr. Char Meng Chuor explains, "In 2011, Cambodia reported 15,980 dengue fever cases and killed 73 children." Dengue fever is most common in Southeast Asia, where Cambodia is located.

For Dengue Fever there is specific treatment. Dengue Fever is a lot of self healing, which includes of getting a lot of rest and trying to drink plenty of fluids. In Cambodia, getting safe water is difficult. The main source of any villager's drinking water comes from rainfall. It is collected in a large cement structure for a long amount of time where then collects unsafe environment parasites. A problem with having all this water here is that's what mosquitoes like so it could be a source of mosquito reproduction. If the mosquitoes are multiplying their population there is a higher chance of getting dengue fever. The average American family uses about 300 gallons of water daily. Just think how lucky we are here in the United States having easy access to water that is safe and clean.

This disease is unfortunately very common in Cambodia. This disease is Japanese Encephalitis, once again the mosquitos are to blame for this disease. This disease is like the dengue fever and you also could have brain swelling but if you start feeling unwell and if you are able to get medical help go as soon as you can. The long term effect from just a little nibble could be paralysis.

Once again, Japanese Encephalitis is like dengue fever there is no specific treatment. Rest and getting fluids in your body would be helpful to cure this. In the United States medicine would be recommended to break the fever to make things better. In Cambodia getting medicine is very difficult. Recent studies have demonstrated several promising Cambodian medicinal plants. In the future these plants will help get medicine to Cambodians that are in the healing process.

According to the USAID website, From 2000 to 2014, Cambodia more than doubled the rate of deliveries assisted by a skilled provider from 32 to 89 percent and the use of modern contraceptives from 19 to 39 percent. USAID has contributed to these impressive gains by helping strengthen national policies and systems, expand community outreach, and improve access to quality services. USAID also assisted in the expansion of the Health Equity Fund to all health facilities nationwide, which has allowed more than 3 million poor Cambodians to access health services free of charge. USAID is also helping to strengthen government health systems, including information and logistics systems, and improve health financing.

USAID's programs have helped reduce the HIV prevalence from 1.7 percent in 1998 to 0.6 percent in 2015 by improving the quality of HIV services, developing innovative ways of finding the last cases and improving the cost effectiveness of the HIV response. It has supported the national TB-control program to reduce TB prevalence and deaths by more than half and continues to improve the quality of TB services. USAID also helps to improve detection rates of new TB cases and maintain treatment success rates of up to 90 percent. While the number of malaria cases was almost halved between 2004 and 2014, the Cambodia-Thai border continues to be epicenter of artemisinin-resistant malaria. USAID is strengthening malaria control and prevention and surveillance, monitoring drug resistance, and piloting elimination

activities. USAID's avian influenza program has raised public awareness about this growing problem and strengthened national- and provincial-level capacity to respond to suspected outbreaks.

In examination from Marie Odile-Emond, "In 2016, Cambodia marked 25 years since the first the first HIV case was reported and its national AIDS response sprung into action." Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) do not have a cure. But there are ways that this can be prevented. In 2015, there were 74,000 Cambodians living with HIVs. Each year on World's AIDS Day Cambodians celebrate another year of progress of encouraging HIV testings and getting treatments. In the last ten years the annual AIDS rate has decreased by 20% in the past five years. World's AIDS day is the opportunity to thank everyone who contributes to Fast Tracking progress.

"The education in Cambodia involves basic literature, the foundation of religion and skills for daily life." Cambodian education is split up in two main parts which is basic education which is grades first through ninth. Upper secondary education is grades tenth through 12th so in another way it is high school so us in the United States.

Cambodia is known for its treatment program for HIV-positive people. According to Dr. David Smith, "More than nine out of ten patients eligible for antiretroviral drugs are getting the medicine." Antiretroviral drugs are one of the most effect medicine for HIV. Cambodia is receiving many donations to try lowering the amount of HIV and AIDS in their country. Mr. Hecht, a reporter from BBC News, says "gradually reducing donations would allow Cambodia to take more control of its HIV/AIDS programs. Dr. Barbara Yee states, "This is one way for Cambodians, especially the younger generation, to finally end AIDS the widespread of this disease as public health threat by 2030."

Contraceptive use in Cambodia is becoming more successful. People are understanding the importance of using condoms to protect themselves because so many people have HIV and AIDS. The new slogan in the 100 percent condom use program is "No condom, no sex" this is very important to get the word to the other people that are not in the program. This is very prevalent with more than two-thirds of the population between the ages 10 -24 when they are becoming sexual active, which was information provided by UNFPA.

According to the USAID, "Approximately two-thirds of all Cambodians carry the Tuberculosis (TB) bacterium, one of the highest in the world." Tuberculosis is an infectious diseases that usually affects the lungs. Tuberculosis is the second biggest killer globally. When a person infected with tuberculosis coughs, sneezes, or talks droplets containing the bacteria are released into the air. Tuberculosis is spread from person to person through air. About 13,000 Cambodians die annually from TB.

In the United States if you have tuberculosis you are able to get antibiotics for six to nine months. In Cambodia with not having every much money the ability to get antibiotics and medicine is very difficult. The World Health Organization states, "The risk of death is higher among males and females in Cambodia. Half of all deaths occur within the first two months of having tuberculosis."

In order to implement this in Cambodia we need to provide funding and education. A good source of funding would be with the help of foreign assistance in Cambodia that is what they rely on a lot. United States is able to aid Cambodia by foreign assistance through the operation lenten rice bowls. Operation

Rice Bowls is an Lenten Program for Catholic Churches. This program occurs during Lent. In Earlville, Iowa we have Saint Joseph Catholic Church. Every year we do a drive to raise money for a country. I think that Operation Lent Rice Bowls would be a great operation to reimplement. We donate money and medicine and items to the organization that we know the Cambodians need. In regards to education if we start with a grass roots based method with specialists from the United States headed to Cambodia to provide basic training and educational references about human disease. If nurses and healthcare professionals shared knowledge and then the selected group of Cambodians shared the information with their fellow people this would assist in preventing the spread of diseases.

The educational system in Cambodia continues to improve. Cambodia has also strengthened gender parity in education, with girls comprising 48 percent of primary students. Cambodia has built nearly 1,000 new schools in the last ten years and has invested significant resources to expand access to a quality education. The government has committed 18 percent of the national budget to education. Between the years 2010 - 2014, the government revised the national curriculum and corresponding student learning materials with the goal to improve learning according to the USAID site. This continues to be good news for all parties involved because as the educational focus changes and proves to be important that lends the hand that the government will be open to training and improvements such as the ones I would like to implement to improve the country.

With all of these diseases having a huge effect on Cambodians there needs to be something done to help these people out. This can be as simple as sex education. If the people are educated at young age it will prevent the spread of the disease of HIV/AIDS amongst a younger generation which will stop the spread over time. As a effort to do so I would have the educated school age. This would hopefully prevent the spread of diseases in the future because they would have learned how to prevent the spread within Another solution for this would ship condoms to Cambodia from the United States. This would be inexpensive for the United States because with the condoms being lightweight it would make the shipping cost low to send. To prevent a few of the diseases like Malaria, Dengue Fever and Japanese Encephalitis we could ship bug repellent to Cambodia to try and keep the mosquitoes away. Addition in the United States has access to many medicines they could send to Cambodia to help prevent Tuberculosis. Once the education is in place and the disease is under control then the country will have time to educate Cambodians. Education about all the diseases are very important. I believe that if someone comes in from the United States that has health information background came to educate Cambodians about all the diseases then they maybe more open minded in the process of taking in the information.

As a part of making Cambodia self sufficient we need to enable the people of the country with educational powers. By enabling people of the country themselves they will be more respectful and open to learning from people that they know. People are more likely to respond and will be able to start implementation of the use of condoms immediately. This will allow the disease to be eradicated quicker. In return this will also slow down the growth of other diseases as well. We as Americans will need to continue to help educate the Cambodians in this process. In order to do so we must continue to educate the people of Cambodia themselves so that they can self advocate to other people of their country because solving human diseases in Cambodia needs to be an alliance of community leaders to make the process viable in the future. Communication and Educational processes within the country will prove to be the most important factors in this issue.

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