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Papua New Guinea, Factor 12: Human Diseases

Papua New Guinea: The Struggle with Human Diseases

Papua New Guinea is a third world country that not a lot of people know about. They have limited access to clean water and they are not very educated in many of the proper medical fields. Human diseases are a big issue in this country and millions of people die everyday because of it. Education is also something that not very many people have. School is optional and most people don't go because they have to take care of their families or help around the house. With the proper knowledge of medicine and agriculture, this country could flourish any day. There is a lot of land that is unoccupied by agriculture and if they knew this they would take advantage of that and be able to produce more food for their families. There are people in this country who know how to farm but will suddenly get ill and then can't perform the tasks, leaving someone who is uneducated in the area to pick up the job. This county peaks my interest because I feel as though there are a lot of hidden gems here that nobody knows about. A lot of people only know Papua New Guinea as a fun vacation spot to go to with family or friends. They see the part of this country that has been changed to make it look good. They don't realize that just a couple of miles away are starving families and people who struggle everyday to make ends meet. All they know how to do is relax in the sand and tan on the beach. That is something that these people wish that they could do. People need to be more knowledgeable about third world countries and need to be making more of an effort to go out and help, because unlike us, they are fighting a battle everyday. Through the following research on Papua New Guinea, the following areas will be shown: an average urban family and farm size, how human diseases affect agriculture and income, how improving human diseases would solve major problems, how other key factors contribute to human diseases and the well being of this country, recommendations on how to cut down on human diseases, and suggestions on how we as a nation can help them with some of their more difficult problems.

A typical family size in Papua New Guinea is a mom, dad, and three to four children. People in Papua New Guinea would like to have multiple children but a majority of children die within a short time after they are born. When couples get married the wife usually moves in with her spouse's husband and his parents. Most marriages end in divorce because most marriages are not based on emotion, only on the fact that they can bear a child. Also, if women want to remarry then their children might be rejected by the husband or his family which means either the women cannot remarry or she has to abandon her children. People in Papua New Guinea are mostly vegetarian and they only eat meat if it is a very special occasion. The three main staple foods that they eat are sago, taro, and yams. The food that they make and harvest is often carried and stored in large drawstring bags or hung on hooks so that animals cannot steal the food. Education is provided but most children do not attend. In fact, boys have a higher attendance record than girls, mostly because girls need to stay behind to learn how to cook and take care of their family when they get one. Healthcare in Papua New Guinea is not the most ideal, and does not seem to be getting any better. The government tried to implement a new system where basic healthcare was free for everyone but the clinics relied solely on the money they received from their patients, which is why this system was not going to work. Many people who live here are small scale farmers that grow sweet potatoes, taro, banana, sago, and yams with an average of thirty-four heads of cattle. The average wage here is 95,643 PGK, which is \$15,031 USD, and people can be doctors and lawyers but most people stick to farming. Most of the food they eat is either bought from the markets or they grow the food in their own gardens. Their gardens are in their yards, usually unprotected, so most people hope that their gardens are safe and sound.

An issue this country is facing is the fact that young children are not interested in taking over the farms or working in agriculture at all. They go to school to become a teacher and end up having to work in the agriculture business because that is the only job available. 85% of the land in Papua New Guinea is unoccupied and could be used for agriculture. To get to the food markets some people have to walk miles and miles and it is really hard for them to get food sometimes because they physically cannot make the walk. This causes children to be malnourished as infants which sadly leads to a lot of infant deaths.

Illness and death is a difficult issue to discuss, and Papua New Guinea has it. Kuru, a disease, is affecting a majority of people in this country and in some cases leads to their death. Within a year of getting this disease people would not be able to get off the floor or even be able to feed themselves without throwing up. This disease primarily hit adult women and young children. This left some villages with no young women left. This makes it hard for villages to produce some food and to give the proper nutrition to children. With the women dying, who was going to help grow the crops or feed the baby while the dad and children were at school and work? Kuru is one of the reasons why some people don't have enough food to feed themselves. Another reason that human disease affects the intake of proper nutrition is what the women do after someone has died. The women will usually cut up the deceased and cook them as a little meal for their family. The children would primarily eat it though, but as they got older their mothers would tell them they can't anymore. This is a belief in Papua New Guinea. They would rather eat their loved ones and have their soul be shown through them then bury them and let the bugs get them. This isn't always the best thing to do because the deceased could have disease that no one was aware of and now they are being consumed by other people. Some diseases were so severe that people had to have no human contact until they were cleared. This meant that they couldn't do anything to help provide for their family, which could lead to many issues. Human diseases are pretty severe since people in Papua New Guinea don't have access to safe water. They have a lack of understanding of toilets and basic hygiene practices to improve their health. Some people don't understand that washing your hands multiple times in a day can improve your immune system and make it stronger to fight off bacteria and diseases. People need to be more educated in the proper hygiene because they need to know that doing little things a different way can make a big difference in the long run. "AIDS has caused a reduction in trained forest managers in parts of Africa, with probable negative consequences for forests". Human diseases have also been hurting the environment. When a lot of people are getting sick from diseases, there is nobody left to do work. Many people have been suffering from AIDS which is leading to a decline in the amount of people who know how to operate forest machinery and how to handle certain situations that have to deal with the environment. "In 2011, 4.4 million children died from conditions which are preventable or treatable: pneumonia, diarrhoea, malaria, birth complications and newborn infections." Human diseases are getting better but they are also worsening at the same time. Groups of people have gone to this country to try and teach them of new medical developments and how to handle certain illnesses but sometimes that isn't enough. New diseases could be formed everyday and nothing could prepare them for that. No matter how much help and information we give them, they will always have a recurring struggle with deaths and diseases.

Human diseases are a major issue in Papua New Guinea which causes a lot of problems. If the diseases and the health of the people living here were improved, so would many other factors. For one they would have more food production because there would be more people to help produce the food. With everyone getting sick, primarily the woman, there are not a lot of people working in the gardens to produce food. Fixing the health would lead to an increase in the amount of food being produced in the country. Also, fixing the health would lead to a fix in the amount of poverty. Poverty is also a very big issue in Papua New Guinea. Many people will starve themselves or will steal from the local markets to try and make it through another night. The amount of people that are getting sick is bad for the community but good for

the clinics because they are the ones treating the sick people and making money off of it. This leads to people getting even poorer because they have to spend all of their money paying doctor bills rather than paying for food or supplies to make food.

Many other issues can influence human diseases in a negative way, such as water sanitation. The water in Papua New Guinea is not very clean at all. Sometimes the people there don't realize that they are drinking contaminated water before it is too late. Then people get sick and that leads to why there is not enough food there. If they had access to clean water everywhere than the amount of people with human diseases would decrease immensely. Another issue that affects human diseases is demographics. Papua New Guinea is having an issue with the amount of people that are living there. Children get born everyday, and if even they don't survive long, they still need to be taken care of and given the right nutrition while they are still alive. The overpopulation in Papua New Guinea is becoming a growing issue. With people living in close quarters and having easily transmitted diseases, the amount of people getting sick rises. Education also affects the number of people getting sick. In Papua New Guinea, school is not a mandatory thing that children and adults have to go to. If the younger generation isn't going to school and isn't learning basic tasks, then they won't be educated in all the bad things in the world. They won't know that they could get sick very easily and that it can not only hurt them but their family. This also leads to a decrease in the amount of doctors. If children don't want to go to school and learn they there won't be anybody to become doctors and try to help when someone gets sick. With of these other issues affecting this one factor, there needs to be some solutions to these problems.

I feel as though the United States should be helping Papua New Guinea more. We have doctors and nurses and people who are educated in the medical field, so we need to be sending them there. They need to educate the people in Papua New Guinea with the new medical practices and teach them the basic necessities. All the doctors should be able to properly diagnose a small illness and they should be able to know who to send someone to if they don't have the right answer for them. Sending just a group of doctors to this country would be very beneficial to them because the doctors there would feel more comfortable when dealing with ill people. Another thing that would really benefit this country is if they had clean water. We need to find a way to help them sanitize their water so that they can actually drink it. Living there for so long, their bodies have been able to adjust but diseases can still affect them very badly. Especially since malaria is a big disease in this country. Mosquitoes carry malaria and they generally like to hang around water, so when people will go to get some they get bitten unknowingly. Then they will go back to their village and will slowly start to experience the symptoms. The next thing they know they can't move because of pain or they have a fever and the chills. There are many ways that we as a nation or as individuals can help improve their quality of life. We just have to make sure that we are taking the steps to do it.

There are many things we as a nation can do to help this struggling third world country. In our everyday lives we have everything we need and we don't have to work hard to get clean water or to walk to our fridge to get a snack. These people don't have that luxury. I feel as though we need to be sending a group of doctors and other educators to this country so that we can help teach them everything that they need to know. Being a third world country they have developed their own techniques and have problem solved using what they have. We can help them and send them new supplies so they won't have to problem solve all of the time and so they will better doing basic medical tasks. It is not very hard to send a well trained group of people to a country who needs it, the hard thing is getting people to go. We have everything that we need in an arm's reach of us and we need to try and provide that to this country. We could also help them learn new agricultural practices so that they can produce more food. This is a very impoverished country and if we can help them learn how to make better quality food, then we should be taking that

opportunity. There should be more organizations that are interested in helping third world countries and we need to be implementing something, because if someone is in need we need to try and do everything we can to help them out.

Knowing all of this information, we know that Papua New Guinea needs help. They have been managing very well on their own, but it is time that we step in and give them some support. We need to help them learn that they have tons of unused land just waiting to be harvested. We need to teach them how to handle small illnesses so that they don't turn into even bigger illnesses. The United States has many resources that they aren't using to help other places. We are so worried about our own issues that we don't see the struggling families of another country. Schooling isn't a mandatory thing so most people don't end up attending which results in a low number of educated people. It would help them out a lot if we were able to implement a system that could help filter their water and for a vaccine that can help stop some of their worst diseases. The epidemic of human diseases and the cleanliness of the water has been an issue in Papua New Guinea for many years, and the problems don't seem to be getting much better. I feel as though the main reason for some of their issues is because they don't have the proper things to help them. They problem solve which is a good skill to have but not very good if you have to perform surgery on someone or cure a potentially life threatening disease. There are so many things that the people in this country are unaware of and it would make a big difference if we were able to make them aware of some of these things. It isn't hard to teach basic hygiene or simple education skills to people, we just have to find the right group that is willing to do it. Given all of these points we now know that Papua New Guinea has a different family life and ways of producing food. They have a big issue with human diseases and the fact that they don't have clean water doesn't help them out very much. There are many things that we can do to help them and suggestions have been made to help solve this problem. Overall, this country made me realize that a lot of people are fighting everyday just to stay alive, and if we can do something to help them out, we should be taking every opportunity that we can.

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