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Media alert from the Media Scanning & Verification Cell, IDSP-NCDC.

Alert ID	Publication Date	Reporting Date	Place Name	News Source/Publication Language
4473	04.01.2018	05.01.2018	Alappuzha Kerala	www.thehindu.com/English http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/filariasis-a-public-health-threat-again/article22369515.ece
Title:	Filariasis a public health threat again in district Alappuzha, Kerala			
Action By CSU, IDSP -NCDC	Information communicated to DSU-Alappuzha, SSU-Kerala			

Filariasis, the disease that the district successfully curbed in the past, is on the rise again. At least 73 fresh cases were reported in the district during the last three years. Health Department officials said the cases had been detected among the migrant population.

A parasitic disease caused by mosquitoes, which infects the human body through tiny filarial worms, filariasis had been under check in the district following a Mass Drug Administration (MDA) programme. However, it has once again reared its ugly head with floating migrant population acting as microfilaria carrier. "Following years of campaign, filariasis had reached a stage where it was no longer a public health problem. Unfortunately, it is making a comeback. As many as 73 cases have been detected among migrant workers," District Malaria Officer Vimal Raj told *The Hindu*.

Mr. Raj said the number of cases were likely to go up. "Most of the migrants come from high-risk States such as Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh. They act as microfilaria carriers, but with hardly any symptoms. As vector-transmitting mosquitoes are aplenty here, the disease can easily be spread to the

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**Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), National Centre for Disease Control,
Ministry Of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India**

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local population. In fact, we already have one such case from Vazhakkala. There is a real threat as the migrant population remains floating and scattered," he said.

According to officials, the recent filariasis was caused by *Wuchereria bancrofti*, a human parasitic roundworm, largely unknown to this part of the region. In the past, *Brugia malayi* roundworm was largely responsible for the disease.

The *Brugia malayi* is transmitted by *Mansonia* mosquitoes, resulting in swelling of the lower limbs. However, *Wuchereria bancrofti*, transmitted by *Culex* mosquitoes, affects the scrotum, legs, and arms in males and breast, genital organs, legs, and arms in females. Following the report of re-emergence of the disease, the Health Department has swung into action. They have launched a campaign for distributing DEC and Albendazole tablets to the vulnerable sections along with screening of the migrant workers.

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