SYMPOSIUM ABSTRACTS

Resting sites for Aedes aegypti in Panamá (Sitios de reposo de Aedes aegypti en Panamá)

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The ground application of ultra-low volume (ULV) insecticidal fog by truck is the most common emergency measure to control Aedes aegypti during a dengue epidemic. Studies indicate that these mosquito populations recover within 3-7 days and that it is not a very effective control measure. These questions, and the possibility of imported cases of dengue entering Panama from nearby countries and because larval infestations (house indices) have reached 10% and above in certain metropolitan and outlying districts during 1988-89, stimulated us to investigate the resting behavior of Ae. aegypti in respect to the effectiveness of ULV spraying.

This project received support from the Panama Health Ministry and SNEM mosquito control, who assigned 6 technicians to work on the
only 13 states. After the eradication of *Aedes aegypti* in 1963, efforts to keep the country free of the vector were fruitless. The first dissemination of the infection and the recent transmission of dengue in high altitude areas demonstrated how difficult the control has been.

During the 1980s, the control program was dependent on the use of chemical tools for insecticide spraying and larval control. As in many other Latin American countries, the program faced problems and limitations in budget, trained human resources and equipment. These were not new but became more severe as transmission in different regions and the risk of dengue hemorrhagic fever increased. Since the solution to vector-borne diseases was traditionally with the government, the community perceived that the solution for dengue or malaria was outside its domain. The present situation hallmarks a point where the feasibility of investing in a technically based solution where specialized personnel, spraying machines and insecticide or larvicide use is out-of-hand. This is also because the vector is a domestic mosquito that breeds in man-made containers in the domestic setting, generated by specific human behavior and patterns of consumption. There is a need to create social awareness and recognize our participation and responsibility as a community, in generating a solution to the problem.

The program in Mexico is beginning to develop educational tools where the community is actively involved in their development and content. Different approaches to control are also being tested where breeding sites are controlled by routine activities like trash recycling schemes and biological control strategies, which will be developed and implemented.