

Essay on cholera

[Environment](#), [Water](#)



Cholera

Cholera, a disease caused by dynamic, changeable and resilient microbial agents, is a communicable disease that causes more than 10 million deaths especially in developing countries as well as leaving millions of people with long-term disabilities (Coleman, 2009). The term “ cholera” is designed to describe a strand of gastrointestinal disease, as well as the bacterium associated with the causation of the disease (Coleman, 2009, pp. 8). Barua and Greenough (1992, pp. 1) attests that the term was first used by Hippocrates who derived the term from Greek words chole (bile) and rein (to flow), thus the term according to Hippocrates meant ‘ flow of bile’.

As instituted by the World health organization (WHO), the number of cholera cases has been on the rise since the 1990’s. In 1998, 130000 cases were reported, in 2001, 20 000 cases while in 2005; 70 000 cases (Coleman, 2009, pp. 56). A dramatic increase in the number of cases was experienced in 2006, where more than 20 000 cases were reported from 52 countries; a 79% increase from 2005 (Coleman, 2009, pp. 56). Since then, there has not been any radical outbreak of cholera.

Vibrio cholerae is the bacterium that causes this fecal disease. This is according to the findings by John Snow and Robert Koch who were the pioneering brains behind the institution of the role the *V. cholerae* plays as the etiologic cause of cholera. Trying to refute the findings by Snow and Koch, a student of Pentenk, Rudolph Emmerich, swallowed a pure strand of the bacteria only to come down with a severe case of cholera, a case that

indubitably asserted the authenticity of Koch and the team's findings (Barua and Greenough, 1992, pp. 130).

Interestingly, not all who ingest the bacterium get ill, some show no symptoms while others with a comparatively weak immune system show mild symptoms. The first symptoms of cholera are diarrhea and vomiting. The victims lose a colossal volume of watery stool, in an unusually short time (Coleman, 2009, pp. 57). The loss of fluid leads to an intense dehydration that is highly exhibited with the loss of skin elasticity, wrinkling of the skin on the fingers and the loss of electrolytes such as ions.

Oral Rehydration Therapy provides an effective way of treating cholera. This therapeutic practice involves the use of clean standard prepackaged solution containing a mixture of salts and sugars, dissolved in water, to replace the fluid lost by the victim through diarrhea (Gleick, 1998, pp. 57). However, in severe cases, an antibiotic, for instance tetracycline, may be used to reduce the volume and the duration of the diarrhea (Gleick, 1998, pp. 57). As means of preventing the disease, cholera vaccines have been availed in many countries. Keeping the environment clean and drinking clean water is yet another means of properly managing the fatal disease; a conjecture based on the fact that cholera is in most cases spread by water.

References

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