

EPREUVE ECRITE D'ANGLAIS

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Disease Vectors in the Local Environment

Vector-borne diseases such as malaria, dengue fever, cause enormous suffering and death throughout the developing world. Vaccines to prevent these diseases, or drugs to treat those diseases that cannot be prevented, offer promise for future disease control. At this stage, however, vaccines and drugs are lacking, for many of the major vector-borne diseases, in part because the disease organisms are formidable adversaries. Perhaps a greater reason is that these diseases are generally not a priority to large pharmaceutical companies although there are important exceptions.

Even when drugs to combat diseases like dengue fever and malaria become available, vector control should remain a priority. Environmental interventions to contain the insects that transmit disease can occur at a range of levels, such as household, community, or region. Improvements in and around the home, for instance, can often make a great difference in controlling vector populations and reducing the incidence of infectious diseases. In areas where this disease remains high, for example, helping low-income families finance home improvements that remove the thatched roofs where the germs hide can be a more effective use of public funds than investing in costly pesticide applications.

Household water storage, used to make up for irregular or inadequate piped water supplies, can also provide reservoirs for disease-bearing mosquitoes and other insects. Giving families fitted covers or screens to place over water containers can be a cheap, temporary way to lower the risk of disease by reducing mosquito breeding sites. Septic tanks and latrine can be made at low cost with polystyrene layers through which female mosquitoes cannot lay their eggs and larvae cannot breathe.

Community programs are an effective, often inexpensive means of vector control. In such programs, community members take measures to improve the environmental conditions in and around their homes, thereby reducing reservoirs for mosquitoes, flies and rats. Mass media campaigns can educate residents about the importance of moving garbage and other mosquito habitats from the community – creating a community “police” force against the disease.

Adapted from World Resources 1998 -99: Environmental change and Human Health

I) Guided commentary (14 points)

- 1) Relying on the text, enumerate two tropical vector-borne diseases. (2 points)
- 2) According to the text, why is it difficult to fight against the vector-borne diseases? (3 points)
- 3) Find in the text four areas where disease bearing mosquitoes can develop. (4 points)
- 4) Give five suggested solutions in the text to fight against tropical diseases. (5 points)

II) Short essay (6 points)

In your opinion, what are the impacts of vector-borne diseases on the development of your country? (About 80 words)