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## Dengue control: have we made any advances?

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Dengue fever/dengue hemorrhagic fever (DF/DHF) has re-emerged to become the commonest and most important mosquito-borne viral disease in the world. The current trend is a 4- to 6-yearly cycle of dengue epidemics, with each cycle becoming larger in magnitude. This trend is likely to continue well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the absence of an approved vaccine, prevention of viral transmission through public health measures directed at controlling the density of the vector mosquito population remains the only viable preventive strategy. Effective prevention depends on a well-planned and operated public health supported by a laboratory-based surveillance programme. However, the necessary infrastructure to reverse this increasing trend is not in place in most dengue-endemic countries. This is despite the availability of tools to prevent such epidemics by controlling the principal vector, *Aedes aegypti*, as well as previous experiences from Cuba and Singapore where dengue was successfully controlled, although not sustainable in the long term given the large movement of people and trade material in the dengue-endemic region. To effectively prevent epidemic DF/DHF in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will require an integrated approach that includes effective surveillance, emergency response, mosquito control, case management, and the effective use of both vaccines and antiviral drugs when they become available.