A team of researchers from Universitas Gadjah Mada joining the Eliminate Dengue Project (EDP) plan to extend their scope of coverage by spreading the wolbachia mosquitoes around the city of Yogyakarta in mid-2016. This is done to minimise the risk of dengue fever in the city. Across the province, in year 2015 there were 2,146 cases of dengue fever, up to 17 of them were fatal. In Yogyakarta city, the number of cases reached 890 with 10 fatalities.

Chairperson of the EDP, Prof. Dr. Adi Utarini, said the EDP released mosquitoes containing Wolbachia natural bacteria to reduce the dengue case in Yogyakarta, also to prove that this method is effective in minimising the contraction of the disease. “Currently, we’re socialising the matter among society and government to prepare for the release of the mosquito. The method releases adult mosquito directly that contain Wolbachia natural bacteria or putting their eggs in a small bucket that will be allocated to residents. “Experiences in Bantul and Sleman showed that up to 80 percent of mosquitoes contain Wolbachia,” said Adi Utarini.

Entomologist Warsito Tantowijoyo, said the Wolbachia in the Ae. Aegypti mosquito body caused the Dengue virus unable to grow, thus unable to contract the disease. Warsito explained that if a female wolbachia mosquito mates with the male that is non-Wolbachia, it will produce offsprings with wolbachia. “But a male wolbachia mosquito that mates with a non-wolbachia female, the eggs won’t hatch,” he said.

Arida Oetami, Head of Health Agency of Yogyakarta, said the release of the wolbachia mosquito...
would not replace the fogging programme that is already known by society despite the discouragement from the WHO on fogging as it caused pollutions.

The release of wolbachia mosquito is conducted in five countries, Australia, Vietnam, Brasil, Colombia and Indonesia. So far, Adi said, the most progressive research lies in Yogyakarta. “In Vietnam the programme is still on process while here in Yogyakarta, the mosquito live among people and is proven to be able to minimise the dengue virus,” she said.

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