

TB and Dengue Fever, Tropical Diseases That Are Threatening

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Climate change and global warming over the past years have increased the incidence of tropical diseases. The global increased temperature contributed to the spread of tropical disease and vectors, including diarrhoea caused by rotavirus, filaria, leprosy, dengue fever, malaria, flu, TB, Hepatitis, and pathogenic fungi.

“Those diseases are found particularly in poor and marginalised countries,” said microbiology expert of Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), dr. Abu Tholib, M.Sc., Ph.D., Sp.MK(K), alongside the "International Symposium on Molecular Medicine for Tropical Diseases" on Wednesday (17/3), in the Faculty of Medicine, UGM. The symposium lasting from 17-19 March involved experts from Indonesia, Germany and Switzerland, who discussed infections and tropical diseases in terms of clinical to molecular aspects.

Tholib said that TB has high prevalence in Indonesia; it is even the world's third highest. The problem is that some types of TB are resistant to existing drugs. “The resistant TB has long been found while the medication is very limited and expensive,” he said.

Apart from TB, other tropical diseases such as dengue fever, still pose a threat. This adds to the fact that in the past 50 years, no vaccines have been found. “Dengue fever is complicated, affecting children as well as adults nowadays. Vaccines and medication for dengue fever are unavailable. So far, we only treat the shock while the virus is handled by the patient's body itself,” he added.

A similar view was expressed by dr. Tri wibawa, Ph.D., chairman of the symposium. He said that in the past 30 years, the prevalence has increased by 50 folds. Tri mentioned that currently there are as many as 1,400 drugs being registered at world drug and health authorities. Drugs for tropical diseases, however, are less than 1% of all drugs circulating in the world.

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