

New Ways to Alleviate Dengue Fever, UGM Releases Wolbachia Mosquitoes

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YOGYAKARTA -Universitas Gadjah Mada's researchers are developing the Wolbachia method to reduce the spread of the dengue virus in Indonesia. The researchers have used the *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes that contain Wolbachia bacteria to inhibit the virus from replicating. Thousands of Wolbachia mosquitoes were released in two hamlets of Sleman regency in Yogyakarta.

Since the release started earlier in 2014, there is an increase in the population of the Wolbachia mosquitoes until 60-80 percents. Researchers claimed the mosquitoes will keep spreading in the local population. Eliminate Dengue Project (EDP) researcher of UGM, dr. Riris Andono Ahmad MPH, Ph.D., told the press on Thursday (25/9) at Sekip N-14, UGM campus, that most of the mosquitoes mate with local mosquitoes.

After observations in the two areas, the Wolbachia mosquito release will likely be extended in the future. Other countries to participate in the programme include Australia, Vietnam, Brasil, and Colombia. Based on Health Ministry data, the number of people having dengue fever in Indonesia is increasing while the mortality rate is decreasing. Throughout 2012, as high as 90,245 people had the disease whilst the mortality reached 816 people.

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