

## Short Communication

### “World Encephalitis Day” – To Increase Public and Professional Awareness of Encephalitis / Encephalopathy: Early Recognition of Symptoms, Early Diagnosis and Prevention

#### Joint Statement by:

Asian Society for Pediatric Infectious Diseases (ASPID), Asia Pacific Pediatric Association (APPA), Hong Kong Chinese Medical Association Ltd (HKCMA), The Hong Kong Society for Paediatric Immunology, Allergy and Infectious Diseases (HKSPIAID), Macau Pediatric Association, The Pediatric Infectious Disease Society of the Philippines (PIDSP), Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society of Thailand (PIDST), Infection and Tropical Diseases Working Group of Indonesian Pediatric Society, Japanese Society for Pediatric Infectious Diseases (JSPID), Singapore Pediatric Society, Infectious Disease Group of Pakistan Pediatric Association, Bangladesh Society for Paediatric Infectious Disease (BSPID), Pediatric Infectious Diseases Academy, India, Malaysian Pediatric Association, Sri Lanka College of Pediatricians, The Hacettepe University Faculty of Medicine, Department of Pediatric Infectious Diseases, Ankara, Türkiye

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On "world encephalitis day", The Asian Society for Pediatric Infectious Diseases (Aspid) and 15 medical societies issued this statement to bring the awareness to "Encephalitis" which involves brain inflammation being caused by bacteria, viruses and other pathogens and "Encephalopathy", a non-inflammatory brain disorder associated with various infectious agents because of the dysregulated host immune response. Encephalitis / Encephalopathy causes high mortality and morbidity worldwide. Patients that have suffered from encephalitis / encephalopathy can exhibit persistent symptoms that include behavioral problems, tic disorders, recurrent headaches, sleeping disorders, motor disabilities and neurocognitive impairment impacting the lives of many affected people and their families in a significant way. We sincerely hope to draw the attention and involvement of different professionals from various disciplines to the coordinated multidisciplinary care of these individuals and their families.

Early identification of the symptoms and signs of encephalitis / encephalopathy can help in timely diagnosis and treatment, alleviating the long-term complications of encephalitis / encephalopathy.

These symptoms and signs include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Sensitivity to light and/or sound
- Neck stiffness
- Sleepiness or lethargy
- Increased irritability
- Seizures
- Skin rashes
- Difficulty talking and speech changes
- Changes in alertness, confusion, or hallucinations
- Loss of energy
- Loss of appetite
- Unsteady gait
- Nausea and vomiting

Most importantly, some of the viral causes of acute encephalitis / encephalopathy are preventable through vaccination, e.g. Influenza, Covid-19, Dengue Virus, Japanese Encephalitis Virus, Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) and Varicella Zoster Virus, etc.

We do hope our professionals would promote the appropriate vaccines to each individual in his/her living circumstance according to his/her health risks assessment.

Members of the Asian Society For Pediatric Infectious Diseases (ASPID) remain committed to working in accordance with the latest scientific evidence, particularly regarding vaccine development, recommendations, and implementation. ASPID will continue to collaborate closely with regional and international partners to monitor emerging infectious diseases, support effective immunisation programs, and promote vaccine confidence to protect the health of children and communities across Asia and beyond.