

HEALTH DATA

The threat of (re)emerging diseases

The map shows where outbreaks of new diseases and diseases thought to have been vanquished have occurred towards the end of the nineties.

The reasons for this have to do with more international travel and further human penetration of previously uninhabited regions, as well as with climate change as described by Professor Sauerborn in his EAHP 14th Congress keynote lecture (see Figure 1).

However, the problems are also emerging on top of our shortage of antibiotics as was outlined in seminar 12 of the 14th EAHP congress (see page 33).

Moreover, the pharmaceutical industry tends to concentrate its research strategies on chronic diseases of the affluent countries rather than intermittent epidemics in developing countries. Some tropical diseases are also very difficult to combat – the search for a malaria vaccine has continued for many years already, while resistance to antimalarials grows steadily.

So we are more likely to have to face some of these diseases in the future, particularly in the warmer countries of southern Europe.

EAHP President, Mrs Jacqueline Surugue, is so right to keep pressing for international collaboration.

Figure 1: Instability of infectious diseases: (re)emerging diseases 1994 - 1999

