

Seven cholera deaths in Dominican Republic

25 March 2011

A cholera outbreak has killed seven people and infected nearly 650 in the Dominican Republic, a Caribbean country bordering Haiti, where the illness has claimed 4,500 lives in the past five months, officials said Friday.

A 43-year-old woman living in Pedernales, 205 miles (330 kilometers) west of Santo Domingo, died this week, bringing the total to seven deaths, the public health minister said in a statement.

Authorities plan to launch a public awareness campaign to warn people about the waterborne [bacterial disease](#) and urge strict hygiene measures to control the outbreak.

Cholera is an intestinal infection caused by ingestion of contaminated food or water. It can strike swiftly, causing intense diarrhea, vomiting and nausea that leads to severe [dehydration](#) and sometimes death.

More than five months after the disease broke out in Haiti's Artibonite valley, the death toll from the cholera epidemic there has reached 4,672, Haiti's health ministry said this month.

Earlier this month, a US team led by a Harvard School of Public Health researcher predicted that up to 800,000 Haitians will contract cholera this year, double the estimates of UN agencies.

The findings, published in The Lancet medical journal, suggested that a combination of access to clean water, oral vaccination and increased [antibiotic use](#) could save thousands of lives.

Haiti and the Dominican Republic share the island of Hispaniola.

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