

SCARLET FEVER LEADS TO TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS IN THE DPRK

North Korean officials have been enforcing country-wide travel restrictions since October in an effort to stop the spread of Scarlet Fever. According to the latest “North Korea Today” newsletter from the North Korean human rights group, ‘Good Friends’, “Scarlet Fever has been spreading from Hyesan to all parts of the country since the middle of last month, leading to emergency quarantine measures.” In addition, the ministry of health has formed an emergency measures committee and set up quarantine zones and treatment facilities in each region.

North Korean authorities announced the quarantine of Hyesan, a city reporting a large number of infections, and publicized travel and relocation restrictions, but the disease has already spread as far as the village of Moonduk in North Pyongan District, and Kilju and Chungjin in North Hamkyung District. Emergency treatment measures have been enacted in each town, city, and village, and supplies of penicillin and antibiotics have been distributed throughout the country while medical teams have been receiving special training on the treatment of Scarlet Fever.

It was reported that despite these emergency measures, due to the overwhelming shortage of medical equipment and facilities and the speed at which the disease is spreading, North Korean authorities are looking into the feasibility of a countrywide travel ban. ‘Good Friends’ reported that in today’s North Korea, without rations or wages available, isolation measures are no different than death sentences, and many North Koreans will continue to travel to other regions, unknowingly increasing the rate at which this disease is spreading.

Since late fall, there have been many reports of throat pain, rashes, and fever. Scarlet Fever

can be treated with penicillin, or high doses of antibiotics. Doctors are also recommending the intake of as much water as possible. Ultimately, Scarlet Fever is not a disease requiring sophisticated treatment techniques or facilities, but due to the inferior quality of the DPRK medical system, North Koreans are paying dearly, from those paying with rashes covering their entire body to those paying the ultimate price: life.

Institute for Far Eastern Studies, Kyungnam University
The Center for International Cooperation for North Korean Development
28-42 Samchung-dong, Chongro-ku, Seoul, 110-230, Korea
Tel: 82-2-3700-0780 Fax: 82-2-3700-0707
E-mail: icnk@kyungnam.ac.kr <http://ifes.kyungnam.ac.kr>