TITLE: NTU develops social media based system that predicts dengue

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SINGAPORE: Researchers at the Nanyang Technological University have developed a new social-media based system that could go some way in Singapore's battle against dengue.

Known as Mo-Buzz, the web system can predict where and when dengue may occur potentially weeks in advance.

Researchers said it could potentially predict dengue outbreaks weeks in advance and will also enable users to help health authorities monitor the spread of dengue.

Users can snap a picture of a mosquito breeding site on their mobile device and the report will be geo-tagged to their location. It is then shown live on Google Maps in the system.

By also tapping on historical weather data and information of previous dengue incidents, the system can highlight potential hotspots forming.

This information can then be swiftly disseminated.

Associate Professor May O Lwin who is the principal investigator of Mo-Buzz said: "Health authorities can warn the public in advance so Mo-Buzz will allow the public to be forewarned about any potential dangers that's coming their way. And at the same time, it is a source of information that they can get real time and be part of the civic engagement where information about the different types of dengue breeding grounds can be fed back to the public."

She added that Mo-Buzz can also be a source of information and health communication to help the public to be aware of the dangers of dengue and how they can take preventive and precautionary measures.

Users can also receive customised health information that they can share with their family and friends using social networking tools, like Facebook and Twitter. Researchers hope this will encourage the community to adopt behaviours that will reduce their risk of contracting dengue.

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