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UNICEF is sending 20,000 water, sanitation and hygiene kits to the North of Mali as part of its emergency response to a cholera outbreak. Some 120,000 people, including 60,000 children, will benefit from the supplies that include purification tablets, storage containers and other equipment dispatched to Gao and Timbuktu in the North. Local partners will distribute the supplies. Since the start of the cholera outbreak about 10 days ago, six children have died among 56 cases reported in Gao region on the banks of the Niger River. Though cholera is endemic in Sahel, the crisis in northern Mali combined with the massive displacement of people and the onset of the rainy season, is raising fears of a sharp increase in cholera cases in the coming weeks. With these kits, 20,000 families in the North will have access to cleaner water and will be better able to protect themselves against the spread of the 'dirty hands' disease, especially children, who are the most vulnerable. When the outbreak was first reported, UNICEF sent three trucks loaded with medicine and equipment to help partners in Gao respond. Cholera prevention for 500,000 people is underway in high-risk areas. Distribution of kits is accompanied by sessions to explain how to treat water and encourage better hygiene. Each of the 20,000 kits, which will be distributed this week, contain collapsible jerry cans and buckets, and a six-month supply of soap and water purification tablets for a family of six.

The cholera epidemic on top of the nutrition and security crises currently faced by Mali, increases people's vulnerability and risks endangering current emergency response efforts. UNICEF has so far received 12 per cent of the US\$15.8 million needed to respond to the crisis in Mali.

QUESTIONS: (EXPRESS YOUR IDEAS)

1. How many children can benefit from the supplies sent by UNICEF?
2. What is the etiology of cholera?
3. What are the manifestations of cholera?
4. What did UNICEF send during the first cholera outbreak? Do you think it was enough? Support your answer.
5. As a medical practitioner, how are you going to teach people how to prevent cholera?
6. Why is hygiene also important to prevent cholera?
7. Are people in Mali susceptible because of cholera outbreak? Why? Or Why not?