KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE STUDENTS LIVING ON THE HALLS OF RESIDENCE MONA CAMPUS WITH REGARDS TO DENGUE FEVER

A Thesis
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Public Health

of
The University of the West Indies

Lester Cumberbatch
2006

Department of Community Health and Psychiatry
Faculty of Medical Sciences
Mona Campus
ABSTRACT

Knowledge, Attitude and Perceptions of the Students Living on the Halls of Residence Mona Campus with regards to Dengue Fever

Lester Cumberbatch

Background: Dengue is endemic in Jamaica and in the wider Caribbean. The occurrence of dengue has been both more frequent and widespread in recent years due to the *flavivirus* being present, coupled with the high densities of the principle vector *Aedes aegypti* mosquito.

Objective: The purpose of this study was to assess the knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of students living on the halls of residence at Mona, of dengue fever, and to evaluate their knowledge of dengue prevention.

Subjects: The sample was taken from students residing on the six halls of residence Mona Campus. Three hundred and ninety one (391) respondents participated in the study.

Design: A cross-sectional design study was used coupled with qualitative research methodology. Data was gathered through a self-administered questionnaire, focus group discussion, and interviews.

Results: Results of the study indicate that it was clear that persons had some knowledge of dengue: 93% had heard about dengue, 54% knew about the main
vector, and 65% knew where they bred, however only 4% were able to identify
the virus types in circulation. The ability to identify symptoms of dengue differed
significantly between Barbadian students and respondents from other nationalities
($\chi^2 = 15.774$, df = 4  P value 0.001). A significantly higher number of Barbadian
students 29% were affected by dengue as shown by ($\chi^2 = 11.6$, df = 3, p = 0.008).
Seventy percent (70%) of Barbadians correctly identified that dengue was
deremic within the Caribbean compared to thirty-nine percent (39.9%) from
Jamaica. This difference was significant with a ($\chi^2 = 15.36$, df = 16, p = 0.018).

Conclusion: The study concluded that Jamaican nationals who were the majority
of students polled in the study had the poorest knowledge of dengue. This implies
that there is a need to develop dengue awareness and educational programmes
amongst university students and the wider society to aid in the prevention and
control of this disease.