

ABSTRACT

Human leptospirosis and rodent control in Trinidad: An evidence-based approach
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Leptospirosis has been recognized in many countries as a disease of significant public health importance. A study was conducted to describe the current status of human leptospirosis in Trinidad for the period 1996 - 2007. The average annual incidence was 1.83 per 100 000 population. The disease was seasonal with significantly more cases occurring in the wet season. Eighty percent of the cases were male and the case fatality rate was 5.8%. There were no clear-cut risk factors associated with the disease, but the use of geographic information systems (GIS) showed that most cases occurred in sub-urban areas. A Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) survey revealed that the level of awareness to the disease in the general population was low and that there was dissatisfaction with rodent control services offered by the government. A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis of rodent control revealed that insufficient funding was the major problem that affected rodent control operations in the country. It was found that lack of concern with respect to rodent control, the low level awareness to leptospirosis and lack of a proper surveillance system for leptospirosis proved that leptospirosis was not regarded as a disease of public health importance in Trinidad and Tobago.

Keywords: Leptospirosis, epidemiology, spatial distribution, GIS, KAP surveys, awareness, rodent control, SWOT, evidence-based process, surveillance systems, Trinidad and Tobago.