

EPIDEMIOLOGY OF VISCERAL LEISHMANIASIS IN BARINGO COUNTY, KENYA

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Introduction: Visceral Leishmaniasis (VL) or kala-azar is a disease caused by protozoan parasites of the genus *Leishmania* and transmitted by a bite of infected sandflies of the genus *Phlebotomus*. VL is fatal if left untreated. The disease is found in the arid and semi-arid regions of Kenya such as Baringo and West Pokot Counties.

Methods: A retrospective observational study was conducted during 7 years (2010-2016) at Kimalel Health Centre, in Baringo County. Data from patients treated at the Centre during the 7 years was analyzed for variables such as age, sex, method of diagnosis and seasonal variation.

Results: A total of 613 patients were diagnosed with VL and treated between 2010 and 2016. 70% of cases were diagnosed via splenic aspiration while the rest were diagnosed by rK39 rapid antibody test. 55% of all patients were below 14 years

old with a predominance of males (76%). Only one case of VL/HIV Co-infection was reported during this period. There was no seasonal pattern for the disease with cases seen throughout the year. Majority of patients (75%) were treated with the combination of Sodium Stibogluconate (SSG) and Paramomycin (PM).

Conclusion: These results confirm that VL remains endemic in some parts of Kenya such as Baringo County. The disease mainly affects young children <14 years, and males are predominantly affected with a female to male ratio of 1:3. The most common method of diagnosis at Centre is splenic aspiration, and combination therapy is the mainstay of treatment.

Biography

Jane Mbui graduated from The University of Nairobi, Kenya, as a Medical Doctor, with a bachelor's degree in Medicine and Surgery M.B.Ch.B. He worked at Mwingi District Hospital, Kitui County, Kenya, as an intern and rotated in Internal Medicine, Paediatrics, Surgery and Obstetrics & Gynaecology for a period of one year. He worked at Mwingi District Hospital, Kitui County, Kenya, as an intern and rotated in Internal Medicine, Paediatrics, Surgery and Obstetrics & Gynaecology for a period of one year. Thereafter, he joined Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) where he has continued his research. Presently he is working at the Kimalel Leishmaniasis Research and Treatment Center located in Baringo County, Kenya as the clinical site investigator.

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