

Attitude and Knowledge of Primary Health Care Physicians and Local Inhabitants about Leishmaniasis and Sandfly in West Alexandria, Egypt

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Abstract : Background: Leishmaniasis is a worldwide disease, affecting 88 countries, it is estimated that about 350 million people are at risk of leishmaniasis. Overall prevalence is 12 million people with annual mortality of about 60,000. Annual incidence is 1,500,000 cases of cutaneous leishmaniasis (CL) worldwide and half million cases of visceral Leishmaniasis (VL). Objectives: The objective of this study was to assess primary health care physicians knowledge (PHP) and attitude about leishmaniasis and to assess awareness of local inhabitants about the disease and its vector in four areas in west Alexandria, Egypt. Methods: This study was a cross sectional survey that was conducted in four PHC units in west Alexandria. All physicians currently working in these units during the study period were invited to participate in the study, only 20 PHP completed the questionnaire. 60 local inhabitant were selected randomly from the four areas of the study, 15 from each area; Data was collected through two different specially designed questionnaires. Results: 11(55%) percent of the physicians had satisfactory knowledge, they answered more than 9 (60%) questions out of a total 14 questions about leishmaniasis and sandfly. The second part of the questionnaire is concerned with attitude of the primary health care physicians about leishmaniasis, 17 (85%) had good attitude and 3 (15%) had poor attitude. The second questionnaire showed that the awareness of local inhabitants about leishmaniasis and sandfly as a vector of the disease is poor and needs to be corrected. Most of the respondents (90%) had not heard about leishmaniasis, Only 3 (5%) of the interviewed inhabitants said they know sandfly and its role in transmission of leishmaniasis. Conclusions: knowledge and attitudes of physicians are acceptable. However, there is, room for improvement and could be done through formal training courses and distribution of guidelines. In addition to raising the awareness of primary health care physicians about the importance of early detection and notification of cases of leishmaniasis. Moreover, health education for raising awareness of the public regarding the vector and the disease is necessary because related studies have demonstrated that if the inhabitants do not perceive mosquitoes to be responsible for diseases such as malaria they do not take enough measures to protect themselves against the vector.

Keywords : leishmaniasis, PHP, knowledge, attitude, local inhabitants

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