L025 - MALARIA INCIDENCE IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA, 1998-2007

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BACKGROUND

Malaria is endemic in the low-altitude areas of the northern and eastern parts of South Africa where seasonal transmission takes place. Data from the malaria information system from Limpopo province have mainly been used to contribute to national health statistics. The aim of this descriptive study is to give an overview of the available data on malaria incidence in Limpopo province for the seasons 1998-1999 to 2006-2007.

METHODS

The study focuses on reported malaria cases (numbers, incidence rates) and deaths (numbers, case-fatality rates [CFRs]) for the whole province, and by sex, age and district. In order to calculate incidence rates population estimates were obtained from Statistics South Africa.

RESULTS

In total 58,768 cases of malaria were reported, including 628 deaths. The mean incidence rate was 124.5 per 100,000 person-years and the mean CFR 1.1% per season. There is a decreasing trend in the incidence rate over time ($P < 0.001$). The CFR is fairly stable over the whole period. The average incidence rate in men is higher than in women (145.8 versus 105.6; $P < 0.001$). However, the CFR is similar for both sexes ($P = 0.451$). The incidence rate is lowest in 0-4 year olds (78.3), it peaks at the ages of 35-39 years (172.8), after which it decreases again (to 84.4 for those $\geq$60 years). The CFR however, increases with increasing age (to 3.8% for those $\geq$60 years). Vhembe district has the highest incidence rate (328.2), followed by Mopani (197.1), Bohlabela (161.6), Waterberg (30.9), Capricorn (5.8) and Sekhukune (5.5). However, the CFR in Capricorn (3.4%) is high compared to that of the other districts.

CONCLUSIONS

The information from this study may serve as baseline data to determine the course and distribution of malaria in this province over time and for research to evaluate the effect of interventions.