

P2244

Abstract (poster session)

Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever in Bulgaria

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Objectives: Crimean Congo hemorrhagic fever (CCHF) is known in Bulgaria since 1952 and was always in the list of reportable diseases as many cases appear every year. They are located mainly in the Southeast part of the country. A few years ago, an endemic focus of the disease appeared also in the Southwest part of the country. The aim of the study was to investigate different regions of Bulgaria for potential endemicity by investigation of the patients, healthy people for seroprevalence and livestock for infection with the CCHF virus. **Methods.** To detect CCHF virus in patients, RT-PCR nested and realtime techniques were used. Specific antibodies in serum samples from patients and healthy individuals were detected by ELISA. To detect specific antibodies against CCHF virus in livestock, inhouse ELISA using the IbAr 10200 strain of CCHF as antigen was applied. **Results:** In the last 3 years, officially reported cases came from southeast Bulgaria and from the recently activated endemic region in the southeast part of the country. Investigation of over 1000 healthy people from different regions of the country, showed the highest seroprevalence in east, southeast and central Bulgaria (4,6-8%), when a low-grade seroprevalence (2%) was found in southwest and none (0%) in north part of the country. In addition, blood samples from investigated cattle, sheep, donkeys, and goats, in the most affected region (Burgas) showed over 50% seroprevalence and it increased with the age of the animals. **Discussion:** Our data suggest that mainly southeastern but also southwestern Bulgarian regions are areas of active CCHF virus transmission. This is of great importance for risk assessment. Due to increasing spread of CCHF virus in new foci, public health awareness is essential.