

Imported diseases in elderly immigrants.

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BACKGROUND

- The arrival of new immigrants, which are mostly young people, is a growing phenomenon in Europe.
- When this first population is established in the new country appears a second migratory phenomenon due to the arrival of their relatives, which sometimes include elderly immigrants.

OBJECTIVES

- The aim of this study is to describe the characteristics of imported diseases in this group of immigrants

METHODS

- A prospective, descriptive study was designed to include all the immigrants older than 56 years attending in Tropical Medicine Unit of Hospital Central de Asturias, Spain, from 2007 to 2014.
- Screening for asymptomatic patients comprised blood count, biochemistry, basic urinalysis, HIV, hepatitis B virus (HBV) and HCV serologic analysis, stool parasites, PCR for malaria and Chagas disease serologic analysis (immunofluorescent antibody test, ELISA). In all patients performed a PPD and a chest radiograph.
- Qualitative variables were compared using the χ^2 test, the Fisher exact test, when necessary.
- For quantitative variables, the Student t test for nonpaired variables or the Mann-Whitney U test were used. Significance was designated at $p < 0.05$. All tests were performed with the SPSS 15 software for Windows (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA).

RESULTS

- 70 (9.2%) of 759 immigrants were analyzed:
 - Sex: 4 (70%) women
 - Age: Average 60[4] years, limits (55-76 years).
 - Time in Spain: Average 1066[1608] days, limits (4-6570 days).
 - Origins:
 - According to WHO regions: Central Africa (57%), South America (24.3%), West Africa and Central America (5.7%) North Africa (4.5% each), and East Africa (3%).
 - According to countries of origin (see Figure 1).

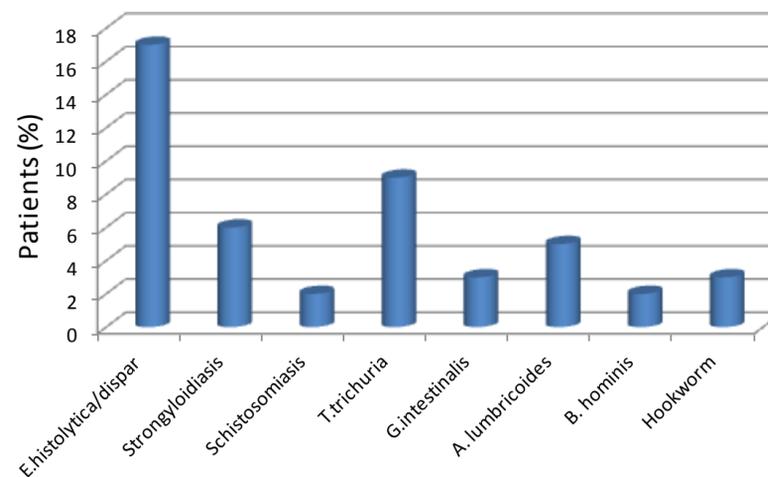


Figure 2: Percent of immigrant patients with intestinal parasites.

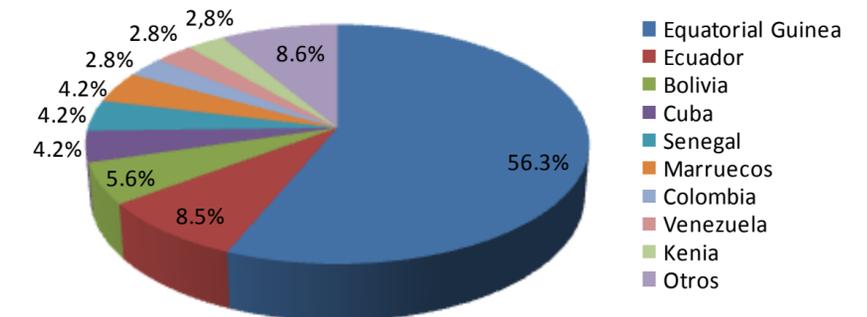


Figure 1: Countries of origin of the immigrant population

- **Cosmopolitan diseases:** 28 (40%) individuals were immune to HBV, 19 (27%) had HCV hepatitis, 8 (11.4%) had a HIV infection and one (1.4%) had chronic HBV. Latent syphilis was present in 33% of patients. While, 11 patients had a latent TB, only one had a disseminated TB.
- **Parasitic infections:** 36 (54.5%) of patients are infected by two or more parasites. 30 (43%) patients had intestinal parasites (Figure 2). 20% of patients had a Filariasis. *Mansonella perstans* infection and 11% had a Loa-Loa. 8 patients had malaria (six of them by *Plasmodium falciparum*), 5 patients had a Chagas disease and 2 patients had a neurocisticercosis.
- The presence of HCV infection, syphilis, and intestinal parasites was significantly higher in subsaharian patients ($p=0.001$). Only in two patients the screening didn't show any disease

CONCLUSIONS

- Imported diseases are frequent in elderly immigrant patients. The prevalence of HIV infection, HCV hepatitis, syphilis and intestinal parasites are high in this group.
- Given the high prevalence of certain parasites infections and the potential lack of suggestive symptoms and signs, selected screening for infectious diseases may be appropriate in this group of patients.