

00456 Identification of social groups according to their level of knowledge about malaria, to support education programmes in an Amazonian, multicultural, transborder context: knowledge, attitude and practices survey

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Background: Despite a steady decline in the number of cases observed since the 2000s in French Guiana, endemic foci of malaria persist at the border between French Guiana and Brazil. The main objective was to describe the knowledge of Saint-Georges de l'Oyapock (STG) inhabitants in this malaria endemic area. Secondary objectives were to determine subgroups of bad versus good knowledge, then to compare socio-demographic characteristics and patient behaviours between the 2 subpopulations in order to adapt prevention public policies.

Materials/methods: A Knowledge Attitude and Practices (KAP) survey was conducted among people over 15 years old in STG neighbourhoods with higher incidence of malaria. Data were collected through a questionnaire of 147 items describing socio-demographic characteristics and KAP. Knowledge related data were studied by exploratory statistical methods (principal component analysis, correlation matrix, factor analysis) in order to derive summary variables. A binary variable assessing the level of knowledge was proposed and then assessed by exploratory approaches.

Results: The mean age of the 844 inhabitants of STG was 37.2 years [15.8]. The sex ratio was 0.75 and 485 (57.5%) people were from Brazil. A total of 251/844 (29.7%) had a poor level of knowledge.

The symptoms were poorly known by 213 people (25.2%), the prevention measures by 343 (44.7%) (bad to very bad level), and 206 (24.4%) did not know that one could die because of malaria. Being under 25 years, living in a native Amerindian neighbourhood, having a native Amerindian language, being a farmer, retired or « at home » occupation and having risk behaviours related to gold mining were significantly associated with a bad level of knowledge.

Conclusions: The study of patient knowledge has permitted to identify for the first time a very limited level of knowledge about malaria in populations of French Guiana living in endemic area. Therefore, messages of prevention and health promotion must be reinforced, diversified and culturally-adapted to increase efficiency.

