

Abstract

Objective: To assess the attitude and practices of household heads towards leishmaniasis in Marigat division.

Design: A cross-sectional study.

Setting: Marigat Sub-County, Baringo County, Kenya.

Subjects: Four hundred and twenty two participants were enrolled into the study.

Results: The belief that Kalaazar is more serious than malaria was reported to be (82.1%) by the household respondents. Majority (92.6%) of respondents reported that they will seek medical advice if they realize they are infected. The fear of death was the major reason for seeking treatment (68.4%). There were various leishmaniasis preventive practices that were employed by the respondents' households to prevent them from being infected with kalaazar. The preventive practices included use of bed nets which were being used by (88%) of respondents, spraying their houses with insecticides (16%), observing personal hygiene (46%), practising proper waste disposal (34%), installed window mesh in the households (5%), use sterilised water (19%) and applying sand fly repellents (14%). The households using bed nets ($\chi^2 = 7.397$, $df = 1$, $P = 0.007$), households spraying their houses with insecticides ($\chi^2 = 7.813$, $df = 1$, $P = 0.005$), households observing personal hygiene ($\chi^2 = 10.144$, $df = 1$, $P = 0.001$), and households that were using sterilised water ($\chi^2 = 7.151$, $df = 1$, $P = 0.007$) had significant partial effects to the occurrence of kalaazar disease.

Conclusion: There was a strong evidence of association between the isolation of patients and occurrence of kalaazar disease ($\chi = 12.908$, $df = 1$, $P < 0.001$). The study also showed that there was strong evidence of relationship on risk of contracting leishmaniasis in young boys ($\chi = 19.038$, $df = 1$, $P < 0.001$) followed by young girls ($\chi = 10.623$, $df = 1$, $P = 0.001$). The isolation of patients with leishmaniasis infections, fear of death and the negative impacts of the disease are the major issues associated with leishmaniasis. The use of bed nets and spraying houses with insecticides are among the preferred methods to prevent the sand fly bites.