

PUBLIC HEALTH & PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

SPECIAL GRAND ROUNDS

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The epidemiology of visceral leishmaniasis in Bangladesh

ABSTRACT

(Studies performed over the past decade have identified fairly consistent epidemiological patterns for visceral leishmaniasis (kala-azar) in the Indian subcontinent. Because humans form the sole infection reservoir, clustering of kala-azar cases is a prominent feature, both at the household level and on a larger scale. Within villages, areas become saturated over a period of several years; kala-azar incidence then decreases while neighboring areas see increases. More recently, post kala-azar dermal leishmaniasis cases have followed kala-azar peaks. Poor micronutrient status increases the risk of progression to kala-azar. The presence of cattle is associated with increased risk in some studies and decreased risk in others, reflecting the complexity of the effect of bovines on sand fly abundance, aggregation, feeding behavior and leishmanial infection rates. Poverty is an overarching theme, interacting with individual risk factors on multiple levels. Carefully designed studies, taking into account the complex web of interconnected risk factors, are needed to identify the most effective combination of control measures.

Food and beverages will be provided.