

TECHNICAL REPORT

Cutaneous leishmaniasis in Jordan: a need assessment

Amman, South Shuneh, Al-Azraq, Ajloun (Jordan), 14-19 May 2017

Objectives

The overall objective of the mission was to carry out a situation analysis on cutaneous leishmaniasis in the country, following a request by MoH Jordan through WHO Jordan, as originally proposed and planned in the Joint Collaboration Programme 2016-2017 between WHO and MoH. Its aims included to review the epidemiology of cutaneous leishmaniasis in Jordan and the control measures currently implemented in the country, and to provide MoH Jordan with advice in regard to the above.

The mission was led by an expert in leishmaniasis, Prof. Riadh Ben-Ismaïl, from "Institut Pasteur" in Tunis, as WHO Temporary Adviser, accompanied by Dr Albis Francesco Gabrielli, Regional Adviser, NTD, WHO/EMRO, and by Dr Lora AlSawalha and Dr Akram Wajih, WHO/Jordan.

The mission consisted of meetings in Amman, travel to endemic areas and meetings with local health authorities, and was concluded by a national workshop attended by all actors working in leishmaniasis in Jordan. As an outcome of the workshop, recommendations were formulated.

1. BACKGROUND

Cutaneous leishmaniasis is endemic in some geographical areas of Jordan, where its epidemiology and distribution are generally well known. The disease is known in Jordanian dialect as "gwedha" - a reference to the traditional treatment of the lesions, based on heating or burning).

The most common form is zoonotic cutaneous leishmaniasis due to *L. major*, present in several rural foci especially along the River Jordan valley (lowlands) and the desert areas in southern Jordan (vector: *Ph. papatasi*; reservoir: rodents, *Psammomys* spp. (proven)/*Meriones* spp. (suspected)).

Cutaneous leishmaniasis due to zoonotic population of *L. tropica* is also present, mainly in highland areas in the northern governorates of Irbid and Ajloun. In similar foci located in neighbouring countries the sandfly proven vectors are *Ph. sergenti* and *Ph. arabicus*, both known to be present in the Jordanian foci. The reservoir hosts are unknown in Jordan but are likely to be the rock hyrax (*Procapra capensis*), a small herbivorous mammal, as well as wild and domestic canids as demonstrated in similar foci in neighbouring countries.

Jordan is up to date free from the anthroponotic, urban and epidemic form of cutaneous leishmaniasis that is highly endemic in almost all the western part of Syria from north to south. Anthroponotic cutaneous leishmaniasis (ACL) in Syria is caused by a different variant of *L. tropica*.