Towards the elimination of malaria in the Union of Comoros: geographical insight on control actions and maintenance factors

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To cite this version:

Artadj Attoumane, Rahamatou Silai, Affane Bacar, Eric Cardinale, Gwenaëlle Pennober, et al.. Towards the elimination of malaria in the Union of Comoros: geographical insight on control actions and maintenance factors. 2nd South African Malaria Research Conference, Aug 2016, Pretoria, South Africa. 0031. hal-01394220

HAL Id: hal-01394220
https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01394220
Submitted on 8 Nov 2016

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Malaria has long been endemic in the Union of Comoros. Since 2007, the Comorian government has been conducting a national strategy for eradicating malaria by Artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACTs) administration, mass drug administration with dihydroartemisinin-piperaquine plus primaquine and large-scale distribution of long-lasting insecticidal nets (LLINs). Between 2010 and 2014, the number of malaria cases has radically fallen by more than 90%. This study aims at describing the spatial patterns of the epidemiology of malaria and at identifying risk factors through a geographical approach. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to:

- characterize the spatial and temporal dynamics of malaria,
- describe its ecological and social patterns,
- assess the impact of control actions,
- statistically model its distribution.

Background

Material and methods

Study area

Located at the northern of the Mozambique channel between the east coast of Africa and Madagascar, Comoros archipelago is composed of four islands: Grande Comore (1,147 km²), Anjouan (24 km²), Moheli (360 km²) and Mayotte (376 km²).

Epidemiological information

Monthly cases, as reported by the “Programme National de lutte Contre le Paludisme,” Ministry of Public Health, Union of Comoros, were georeferenced in the three islands of different scales: by sanitary district and by health center. The incidence of malaria by district was calculated using population data from the National Census. We calculated the clinical prevalence of malaria in each health center and number of clinical patient.

Control actions information

Data of Artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACTs), mass drug administration with dihydroartemisinin-piperaquine plus primaquine and distribution of long-lasting insecticidal nets (LLINs) were used to determine the relation between control action and malaria cases with Linear regression model.

Spatial database

We completed the spatial database with data on environmental and social factors including meteorology, physical geography, population characteristics.

Results

Evolution of malaria prevalence reported in health centers

In three years, 37,808 cases of malaria were reported in 181 health centers with 85.01% of cases in Grande Comore, 9.84% in Moheli and 14.15% in Anjouan. Grande Comore presented the highest average annual clinical malaria prevalence (91.83% of cases), followed by Anjouan (11.22%) and Moheli (9.79%). Population over 5 years presented the highest clinical malaria prevalence with 63.90% against 36.10% of children under 5 years. The highest clinical malaria prevalence of children under 5 years were reported in Moheli (45.56%). From 2011 to 2014 clinical malaria prevalence has decreased severely with reduction rate of -94.96% in the Union of Comoros.

Malaria treatment

Linear regression model of ACTs and clinical malaria cases by health center

In the three years 59,495 malaria patients were treated by Artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACTs). Using linear regression model, we observed high relation between ACTs administration and clinical malaria cases in Moheli (R²=0.96, p-value=0.006-09) and Anjouan (R²=0.72, p-value=2.43e-15).

Conclusion

The decrease of malaria has been driven by different control actions organized by the Government. Locally, some environmental factors seem also to influence the occurrence of malaria, as suggested by the relation between malaria and urban lands in Grande Comore and NDVI in Moheli.

The Comorian Government targets the total elimination of malaria at the end of 2016. Actually, Moheli and Anjouan are classified in elimination phase and Grande Comore in control phase.

Reference


