Abstract

Introduction. Householder vector control measures can be encouraged by health promotion campaigns which take into account peoples attitudes and focus on key gaps in knowledge. Objectives. To describe household sandfly control practices in an endemic area of cutaneous leishmaniasis in the department of Huila, Colombia, and determine how these are influenced by attitudes, knowledge and socioeconomic status. Materials and methods. A household questionnaire was applied to collect information on: demography, socioeconomic status, knowledge of cutaneous leishmaniasis and of sandflies and their role in transmission, and the control activities practiced. Indoor sandfly abundance was estimated by light trap collections. Results. Amongst 249 interviewees, 86% knew about cutaneous leishmaniasis and 98% sand flies. 35% of interviewees who knew about cutaneous leishmaniasis practiced measures with the purpose of its control. This practice was higher amongst the 32% who knew that sand flies transmit cutaneous leishmaniasis. However, 82% of interviewees practiced sand fly control measures, and these were significantly associated with high sand fly abundance. Measures included smoke, bednets, and house spraying with insecticide or non-insecticidal substances. Householders using the high cost measures (bednets and insecticide) had the highest economic status. Conclusions. Health education programmes should note that sand fly nuisance can initiate control measures, but that knowledge of the role of sand flies in transmission could enhance activities. The socioeconomic findings indicate that targeted bednet subsidies

Keywords

Psychodidae; Lutzomyia; health knowledge, attitudes, practice; prevention & control, leishmaniasis, Colombia.