Evaluation of the Leishmania Surveillance System, Yemen, 2021

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Abstract

Background: Control of preventive chemotherapy-targeted neglected tropical diseases (PC-NTDs) depends on strengthened health systems. Efficient health information systems provide a stimulus to reaching the sustainable development goal aimed at ending PC-NTD epidemics. However, there is limited assessment of surveillance system functions linked to PC-NTDs that are hinged on the optimal performance of surveillance system attributes.

Objective: The aim of this study was to assess the usefulness and performance of the National Leishmania Control Program (NLCP), and to estimate the strength and weakness points of the system.

Methods: We followed the updated six steps of Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for evaluating public health surveillance systems. Data were collected using in-depth interviews with relevant stakeholders at the central level and semistructured questionnaires at the peripheral level. We used questions (yes, no) to assess the usefulness and a 5-point Likert scale to measure the attributes. The final score was interpreted as poor (<60), average (60-80), and good (>80).

Results: The NLCP seemed to be useful (86%) and some of its objectives were met. The system has average performance in flexibility (78%), simplicity (64%), acceptability (80%), and data quality (65%). Poor performance was indicated for stability (33%) and timeliness (8%). The overall performance of the NLCP was deemed to be poor (55%). Continuation of the system was the strongest point, whereas the lack of governmental and agency funds was the weakest point.

Conclusions: The NLCP was found to be useful regarding the attributes assessed; simplicity, flexibility, acceptability, and data quality were deemed to be average, whereas stability and timeliness were considered to be poor. Governmental financial support to the program is highly recommended. In addition, creating a database for staff at the peripheral level and expanding the number of health facilities that serve as Leishmania units are required.

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KEYWORDS
evaluation; surveillance system; Leishmania; Yemen