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Perceptions and behaviors associated with emerging arboviruses in French Guiana

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The recent emergence of chikungunya and Zika virus worldwide aroused global attention due to their rapid spread and high potential for epidemics. Effective management of new arboviruses risks in the phase that no specific treatment or vaccination is yet possible is largely dependent on precautionary behavior of the population. The knowledge and understanding of the mechanisms underlying perceptions and behaviors are essential for authorities in charge of vector-borne diseases prevention to implement effective communication and promote precautionary practices. In the context of emerging arboviruses in French Guiana, we conducted two surveys among students and the general population respectively. A multifactorial analysis and a logistic ordinal regression were performed to explore and assess risk perceptions and protective behaviors and identify their potential determinants among the population of French Guiana. An emergent arboviral disease appeared as a new health threat that concern the public more than others existing *Aedes* mosquito-borne diseases, with a significant degree of perceived worry and severity. Furthermore, perceptions varied considerably among different social groups and geographic areas with an important gender effect related to Zika perceptions. Women were significantly more afraid about Zika, felt more exposed and characterized the disease as more severe and as affecting the patient more than did men ($p<0.001$). The adoption of protective behaviors was associated with socio economic and environmental factors, risk perceptions and behaviors. A negative association between the level of knowledge and the adoption of protective behaviors was observed (OR=0.69 [0.49-0.98]). Our results suggest that the adoption of protective behaviors would not necessarily rely on the knowledge but on individual factors and perceptions associated with the disease, as a multi-factorial process. Such data will be subsequently analyzed with seroprevalence data in order to identify from these socio-behavioral factors which are potential determinant of the infection of dengue, chikungunya and/or Zika viruses.

Biography

Camille F is currently finishing her PhD on the study of perceptions and behaviors related to arboviral infections among the population of French Guiana at the Epidemiology Unit at Pasteur Institute of French Guiana with Dr. Claude Flamand. She has 7 publications in the field of infectious diseases and already presented her research in three congresses.

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