

Melioidosis in Taiwan

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Abstract

Objective: in this study, we analyzed reported cases of melioidosis in Taiwan, to understand the current status of melioidosis. Methods: we compiled epidemiological data and isolates of reported cases of melioidosis in Taiwan. We then confirmed the isolates as *Burkholderia pseudomallei* using biochemical studies and polymerase chain reaction. Results: 149 confirmed cases were reported between 2000 and 2006. There were more men than women, and the majority of them were aged 51- to 70- years. Geographically, Kaohsiung County had the most cases, followed by Tai-Nan City, Tai-Nan County, Kaohsiung City, and Ping-Dong County. July had the highest number of cases. Clinical symptoms of melioidosis were diverse, including fever, cough, and pneumonia. Vocations that were thought to be related to melioidosis, including farmers, woodsmen, fishermen, and animal husbandry only accounted for 6% of the cases. Conclusion: most of the melioidosis cases in Taiwan occurred in Kaohsiung City, Kaohsiung County, Tai-Nan City, Tai-Nan County, and Ping-Dong County, all of which are in southern Taiwan, below 20 degrees of latitude. This is also the Er-Ren River basin.

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Analysis of the 2005 cluster of cases showed that before the outbreak was publicized, the average diagnosis latency was 12.8 days, with 33.3% mortality. After the disease is known, the average diagnosis latency shortened to 7.2 days and the mortality decreased to 16.2%.

Keywords: melioidosis, *Burkholderia pseudomallei*