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Abstract

Hualien and Taitung counties are endemic for scrub typhus in Taiwan. Cases in the period of 2001 to 2012 were analyzed to investigate the epidemiological features of scrub typhus in eastern Taiwan. Annually, 19.8% of all cases in Taiwan were reported in eastern Taiwan, whereas 25.7% of all confirmed cases were identified in eastern Taiwan. The incidence rate was 17.26 per 100,000 populations in eastern region, which is 10.5 times higher than in Taiwan as a whole. The highest prevalent age group was 40 to 59 years old, of which jobless people and farming–fisheries industry people were 39.1% and 24%, respectively. Besides, trend of monthly confirmed case numbers was similar between Hualien and Taitung, with two peaks in May–July, and October–January. This study indicated that nine townships had high risk of scrub typhus, including Guangfu, Rueisuei, Fuli, Jhuosi, Lanyu, Beinan, Taimali, Yanping, and Luye townships. To reduce the risk of infection of scrub typhus in eastern Taiwan, the measurements to control scrub typhus should be emphasized as following : continuous monitoring for the high risk townships, strengthening the case reporting from clinic in high risk townships, providing materials for education, and increasing communication to the high risk townships.

Keywords : scrub typhus, incidence, epidemiological features