

Letters to the editor

Medwave 2016 Oct;16(9):e6566 doi: 10.5867/medwave.2016.09.6566

Echinococcosis and cysticercosis: neglected diseases in Chile

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Citation: Parra-Valencia E, Urra-Canales A. Echinococcosis and cysticercosis: neglected diseases in Chile. *Medwave* 2016 Oct;16(9):e6566 doi: 10.5867/medwave.2016.09.6566

Publication date: 5/10/2016

Dear editor:

In the context of the World Health Assembly in May 2013 and the roadmap designed by the advisory group Neglected Tropical Diseases of the World Health Organization [1], it should be noted the epidemiological importance that echinococcosis and cysticercosis acquire in Chile.

Echinococcosis or hydatidosis is a zoonotic disease often associated with poverty. It is caused by tapeworms of the genus *Echinococcus*, being the organism most frequently involved the *Echinococcus granulosus* especially in the

hydatid cyst. The human being is an accidental intermediate host in the cycle of this organism, often manifesting liver and / or lung cystic tumors. Cysticercosis is also related to the socioeconomic status of the country and is caused by tapeworms of the genus *Taenia*, highlighting *T. solium* and *T. saginata* [2].

To appreciate the trend in mortality from this zoonosis in Chile, an analysis of mortality caused by echinococcosis and cysticercosis between 2009 and 2013 from the data in the Yearbooks of Vital Statistics of the National Institute of Statistics was performed (Table 1).

Year	Echinococcosis mortality†			Cysticercosis mortality†			Echinococcosis SMR‡	Cysticercosis SMR‡
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women		
2009	15	8	7	7	3	4	0,17	0,04
2010	18	10	8	10	8	2	0,13	0,06
2011	22	10	12	5	3	2	0,13	0,03
2012	23	15	8	3	2	1	0,10	0,02
2013	29	18	11	7	5	2	0,09	0,04
Total	107	61	46	32	21	11		

† Based on mortality data collected by the National Institute of Statistics of Chile, INE (2009-2013). The topic "echinococcosis" corresponds to the code "B67" from ICD-10. The topic "cysticercosis" corresponds to the code "B69".

‡ Specific Mortality Rate (SMR) echinococcosis and cysticercosis in relation to the estimated population total (deaths per 100,000 individuals per year).

Table 1. Echinococcosis and cysticercosis mortality. Specific mortality rates by echinococcosis and cysticercosis in Chile, 2009-2013.

While these diseases are not major causes of mortality compared with others such as acute myocardial infarction or different types of cancers, they convey a significant socio-economic burden in years of potential life lost. A recent study noted that deaths from echinococcosis are preventable and therefore wrongful [3], an idea that is totally acceptable considering that in sectors such as Maule, Ñuble and Araucania farming is the economic livelihood of many families. Considering the results of our analysis, 139 people died during 2009 and 2013 from preventable and treatable infectious diseases.

It is necessary that the relevant ministerial authorities consider this matter with more emphasis so that in conjunction with the national medical community, achieve reductions in the incidence, prevalence, and mortality from these diseases, and many others that are preventable in the rural sectors of our country. Conducting environmental sanitation measures, having greater control of breeding cattle and for instance, adding cysticercosis to the list of notifiable diseases, an improvement in this topic could be achieved and thus comply with the internationally established agreements.

Notes

From the editor

The authors originally submitted this article in Spanish and English. The *Journal* has not copyedited this English version.

Declaration of conflicts of interest

Authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Financing

The authors declare not having received any funding whatsoever for writing this letter.

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