

ANNEX 6. PREVENTION CAMPAIGN AGAINST HANTAVIRUS PULMONARY SYNDROME IN ARGENTINA

In Argentina, the first cases of hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS) were identified in the central area of the country. Prevention strategy for HPS was incorporated into the existing, well-developed campaign against Argentine Hemorrhagic Fever (AHF), another severe rodent-borne viral disease. Using the same materials, the health officials introduced the idea of another rodent-borne disease to both the general public and health personnel. Differences between the two diseases, such as the fact that AHF is vaccine preventable while HPS is not, were highlighted. Surveillance for HPS and AHF was carried out simultaneously.

In May 1995, HPS emerged in the Andean-Patagonian area of the provinces of Chubut and Río Negro. Local, regional, provincial, and national health authorities were contacted, and health education efforts were developed. Materials provided by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Instituto Maiztegui were used and adapted to the local geographic and social conditions.

Media sources such as newspapers, TV, and radio instructed the general public on basic information about HPS and prevention measures. Other communication channels, such as health workers, primary and secondary schools, universities, firemen, janitorial staff of schools, trash collectors, forestry workers, park rangers, municipal employees, and public and private businesses, were used to communicate messages about HPS. Brochures were mass distributed door-to-door by health workers. A local education video was also developed and shown at schools and tourist information sites.

Health education efforts were extended beyond the general public and health professionals. Work was done in collaboration with the national parks in the region and the provincial tourism authority to carry out health/sanitation assessments and inspections in tourist areas: cabins, hotels, and campgrounds. Rodent eradication and fumigation were conducted in areas considered to be at risk.

Among the Spanish-language educational materials developed were:

- Síndrome pulmonar por hantavirus: Información para profesionales

- Síndrome pulmonar por hantavirus: Información para la población
- Mensajes para la difusión radial y televisiva

For more information on these materials, contact:

Instituto Nacional de Enfermedades Virales Humanas (INEVH—ANLIS)
Monteagudo 2510
2700 Pergamino
Provincia de Buenos Aires
Argentina
Telephone: (54-477) 33044; Fax: (54-477) 33045
E-mail: postmaster@inevh.sld.ar

A national meeting is held annually for physicians, laboratory workers, and public health personnel involved in the HPS program. Materials are available in Spanish from the last two meetings:

- Recomendaciones de la 1ª Reunión Anual sobre SPH en Argentina
- Recomendaciones de la 2ª Reunión Anual sobre SPH en Argentina

For details on these materials, contact:

ANLIS Dr. Carlos Malbrán
Vélez Sársfield 563
Buenos Aires, Argentina
Telephone: (54-1) 303-1804/10

For more information about Argentina's health education program in Chubut and Río Negro, contact:

Dirección de Zona Sanitaria Noroeste (Siprosalud)
Rivadavia 826
9200 Esquel
Provincia de Chubut
Argentina
Telephone: (54-945) 51422/50922
Fax: (54-945) 51428/51426