



Emerging and Reemerging Infectious Diseases, Region of the Americas

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Hemorrhagic Conjunctivitis in Central America and the Caribbean

Since last month and continuing to present, several outbreaks of hemorrhagic conjunctivitis have been reported in various Central American and Caribbean countries. In Central America, the disease has mainly affected four countries:

- **Nicaragua** presented a radical increase during the month of May. People from 5 to 14 years were the most affected, and the counties with the highest number of cases were Managua and Chontales. Honduras suffered a big outbreak mainly among factory workers. The cities most affected were San Pedro Sula, El Progreso, La Lima, and Chomola.
- **Guatemala** reported 2,035 cases to 20 September 2003 in the 14 health zones. The national incidence rate is 13 cases per 100,000 inhabitants. Of the cases, 81% are concentrated in five areas: Izabal, Chiquimula, San Marcos, Petén Suroriental and Guatemala City.
- In **El Salvador**, 335 cases of hemorrhagic conjunctivitis occurred up to 16 September. The more affected health zones were the Center zone, Santa Ana and New Concepción. Samples have been taken from three health zones. Results to identify the causal agent are pending, although viral infection is suspected by the symptoms presented.
- In the **Caribbean**, eight countries reported having had cases of hemorrhagic conjunctivitis. The start and end of the outbreaks, and the description of them, are showed in the following table:

Table 1: Outbreaks of Hemorrhagic Conjunctivitis in Caribbean Countries

Country	Start	End	Causal Agent
Antigua and Barbuda	September	Cases continuing to appear.	Undetermined
Bahamas	May	End of August	Undetermined
Belize	1 August	9 September	--
Curaçao and Donaire	Beginning of August	End of August	Enterovirus (1 sample)

French Guiana	Beginning of June	Middle of July	Enterovirus (10 samples)
Guadeloupe	Beginning of July	Downward trend since beginning of September.	Undetermined
Martinique	10 August	Cases continuing to appear.	Undetermined
Jamaica	First week of July	Downward trend since end of August.	Adenovirus
St. Lucia	Middle of August	Middle of September	Undetermined
Suriname	Second week of July	Cases continuing to appear.	Clinical suspicion of enterovirus.
Turks and Caicos Islands	End of August	Downward trend in September.	Undetermined
<i>Source:</i> Caribbean Epidemiology Center (CAREC): Caribbean Surveillance Network (Carisurvnet).			

Sources

Caribbean Epidemiology Center (CAREC): Caribbean Surveillance Network (Carisurvnet).

Laboratory reports and Department of Epidemiology of the respective countries.
Boletín Epidemiológico de Guatemala (Guatemala Epidemiological Bulletin), Week 37-03.

Boletín Epidemiológico de El Salvador (El Salvador Epidemiological Bulletin), Week 38-03.