


Knowlesi malaria: newly emergent and of public health importance?

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Abstract

Several questions on public health impact have arisen from the discovery of a large focus of the simian malaria parasite, *Plasmodium knowlesi*, in the human population. *P. knowlesi* malaria is not newly emergent and was overlooked until molecular tools to distinguish between *P. knowlesi* and the morphologically similar *Plasmodium malariae* became available. Knowlesi malaria is a zoonosis that is widely distributed in Southeast Asia and can be fatal. Information on knowlesi malaria should be included in medical and public health guidelines to encourage the accurate diagnosis and treatment of patients, and monitor the incidence and distribution of cases. A complete emergence of *P. knowlesi* into the human population could be overwhelming and, although challenging, the prevention of this situation deserves serious consideration.