ANALYSIS OF THE INCIDENCE OF LEPROSY IN THE CENTRAL REGION OF ESPÍRITO SANTO

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ABSTRACT

Leprosy is a chronic infectious disease, caused by *Mycobacterium leprae*, which mainly affects the skin, peripheral nerves, mucous membranes and eyes, causing permanent deformities, contributing to the social stigma of affected individuals. Considered a relevant public health problem, leprosy is of high magnitude in several regions of Brazil, and it is essential to monitor its incidence to support control policies. This study aimed to **analyze the incidence of leprosy in the** Central Region of Espírito Santo, comparing the cities of Colatina, Linhares and Vila Valério. This is an observational, descriptive and cross-sectional study, carried out with secondary data obtained from the Wiki Saúde platform, referring to the period from **2020 to 2025**. The variables sex, race/color, and age group of the reported cases were analyzed. The results pointed to an increase in the number of cases, mainly in the municipalities of **Colatina, Linhares, and Vila Valério**, with emphasis on the year **2023**, which concentrated the highest number of notifications. Regarding gender, there was a predominance among men (**214 cases**) compared to women (**158 cases**), with a higher concentration of men in Linhares and women in Colatina. Regarding race/color, most cases occurred in brown individuals (**178 cases**), followed by whites (**105 cases**) and blacks (**34 cases**). Regarding the age group, men between 65 and 69 years old (**29 cases**) and women between 50 and 54 years old (**20 cases**) stood out. The data show a significant increase in leprosy in the central region of Espírito Santo, highlighting the need to intensify prevention actions, early diagnosis, timely treatment and educational campaigns to reduce social stigma. In addition, a higher incidence was observed among brown men, which reinforces the importance of investing in the qualification of notification, epidemiological surveillance and the strengthening of public policies to combat leprosy.

Keywords: Leprosy. Epidemiology. Public health.

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