

Epidemiology of Melioidosis in Sri Lanka

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Although melioidosis was diagnosed in a European tea broker in Ceylon in 1927, no further patients were identified till a 48 year old diabetic man succumbed to septicaemic melioidosis in 2003. National surveillance was instituted in 2007, eighty years after publication of the first local case report. More than 500 culture-positive cases have been detected by the national surveillance programme to date. It is clear that melioidosis is endemic in Sri Lanka with a wide geographic distribution and demographic reach. There is an urgent need to make melioidosis a notifiable disease, establish national melioidosis registries, and add melioidosis to the WHO list of neglected tropical diseases.