



Epidemiological Profile of Food Borne Illness in Grenada, 2019 – 2021

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Abstract

Background: Food-borne illness (FBI) is defined as sickness caused by the consumption of contaminated foods or beverages. In Grenada, FBIs are a reportable disease due to its impact on the countries' healthcare system, food and tourism industry and economy. The aim of this study was to describe the epidemiological profile of reported FBI cases in Grenada, 2019-2021. **Population and Methods:** A descriptive study was conducted on reported FBI cases from health centres and hospitals in Grenada between January 2019 to December 2021. Routine surveillance data (age, sex, parish and reported cases) were entered, cleaned and analyzed in Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics and illness attack rate were calculated. **Results:** Two hundred and ninety-six (2019, n = 125; 2020, n = 90; 2021, n = 81) FBI cases were reported for the three-year period. More than 25 percent of the cases were 25 - 44 years old (2019 - 43.2%, n = 54; 2020 - 32.2%, n = 29; 2021 - 29.6%, n = 24). Most of the cases were female (2020, 58%, n = 47, 2021, 50.6%, n = 41). However, in 2019, more than 50 percent of the reported cases were male (n = 63). The highest number of cases were reported in May 2019 (15.2%, n = 19) and December 2020 (18.9%, n = 17) and 2021 (22.2%, n = 18) in St. George parish. The age groups with the highest risk of illness were 25 - 44 years in 2019 (14.2 cases per 10000 population) and 15 - 24 years in 2020 (9.3 cases per 10000 population) and 2021 (8.9 cases per 10000 population). Females had a higher attack rate than males in 2020. **Conclusion:** Adults (25 - 44 years), were the most affected group over the period reviewed. The data showed no sex-specific differences among case and attack rate in 2019 and 2021. FBIs are a serious health concern for Grenada's tourism industry. To reduce the incidence of and prevent future FBI cases, food vendors should be trained in proper food handling practices. A study limitation was the lack of diagnostic capacity to identify specific FBI pathogens, to better inform food safety recommendations..

Palabras clave: foodborne illnesses; public health surveillance; tourism; Grenada.

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