

Tropneteurop: a regional surveillance network

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Tropneteurop is an European Network of Imported Infectious Diseases Surveillance. The network consists of 32 member travel/tropical medicine clinics in west and east Europe, accounting for an average of 45,000 patient encounters / year. It is headed by an elected coordinator / steering committee and functions by established electronic links between sites to share information on imported infectious diseases.

Tropneteurop has several objectives and potential outcomes. First, it has the capacity to detect emerging infections of potential regional or global impact at their point of entry into the domestic population. By immediate reporting of standardized information on sentinel events, the network can serve as convenient tool to alert public health authorities and trigger further cluster investigations. Second, it provides ground for a continuous steering of strategies by public health authorities. Third, by providing accurate sentinel surveillance on specific diseases it is complementary to the current, divergent, European system of disease notifications, and has greater potential for future case control studies to identify specific risk factors. Fourth, the network is a sound framework to generate consensus on clinical guidelines for the management of imported infectious diseases. Fifth, by maintaining stable links by European Institutions and professionals, the network provides the basis for permanent collaborative research in Europe.

Reporting started in February 1999, focusing on malaria, schistosomiasis and dengue fever. In addition, all members are asked to report unusual presentations and diseases. Trends in malaria, schistosomiasis and dengue diagnosis within the network are regularly produced. In January 2000 TropNet contributed to the early identification of the falciparum malaria epidemic in Santo Domingo, which resulted in the change of international policies for malaria prevention for travelers and the establishment of major control efforts in the island. In 2000, outbreaks of vivax malaria in Greece and malaria in Chinese immigrants were detected. Transplacental infection of *Leishmania donovani* infection in a German child was reported.