SESSIONE 17 EVOLUZIONI EPIDEMIOLOGICHE E DIAGNOSTICHE IN PARASSITOLOGIA

LA LEISHMANIOSI IN ITALIA OGGI.

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Two leishmaniasis entities are endemic in Italy, zoonotic visceral leishmaniasis (VL) and sporadic cutaneous leishmaniasis (CL) caused by Leishmania infantum; a risk for the introduction of exotic Leishmania is debated. Both VL and CL are compulsory notifiable disease; notifications are gathered at regional level and subsequently centralized at the Ministry of Health. ISS performs surveillance of the diseases trends and of imported cases identified at the Leishmania Identification Centre. Human VL and CL cases, georeferenced and identified by clinical form, were classified as autochthonous, imported from a specific or undetermined country, and as unknown geographical origin of infection.

The analysis of VL trend from 1989 to 2017 indicates a complex phenomenon, in which more than one component was represented: (i) an outbreak involving infants and immunocompetent adults in parts of the Campania region (1989-2009); (ii) a second outbreak (1991-2001) affecting human HIV-infected individuals throughout the country, that declined owing to the use of ART therapies; (iii) a disease increase among immunocompetent and immunosuppressed individuals throughout all regions; iv) an outbreak in Emilia-Romagna region reported since 2012 that remains still active. The number of cases peaked in 2000 and 2004 with more than 200 cases/year, and subsequently declined to reach 80 cases/year in the period after 2010.

In the 2011-2017 period, the average of Leishmaniasis cases appears similar to the period before the 2 epidemics in 1989-2009 (40 cases/year). Due to the improvement of CL surveillance in some territories, the number of notified CL cases became quite similar to that of VL cases. ISS directly diagnosed or collected information from 297 human cases (186 VL, 98 CL, 9 multiple forms, and 3 mucocutaneous). The trend of imported cases appears to be low but constant through the years (8 cases/year). Of them, 18 VL and 31 CL from the Old World, and 2 VL and 6 CL from the New World, were diagnosed. In the whole period, 7 Leishmania species were identified according to the most recent validated typing methods, in order to support both the treatment and the clinical follow up: L. infantum, the only species detected in autochthonous cases, L.tropica, L.major, L.infantum, L. donovani, L.panamensis, L.braziliensis and L.guyanensis. The human database analysis has confirmed the endemic status of VL and CL throughout Italy.