

UKOTs Public Health Programme Newsletter

September 2023

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Welcome! This publication provides updates for colleagues and partners across UKHSA, OHID and the Overseas Territories. If you have any queries, feedback or contributions please contact: UKOTs.Programme@ukhsa.gov.uk

Medical Entomology Team visit to Gibraltar

The Medical Entomology and Zoonoses Ecology (MEZE) team visited Gibraltar in September to perform a snapshot mosquito survey. The purpose was to understand the current distribution and density of mosquitoes, with a particular focus on *Aedes albopictus*; a competent vector of dengue and chikungunya. The MEZE team have been involved with surveillance in Gibraltar since 2016, with the last visit in 2021. Part of the project was to continue to support local efforts to assess the status of the mosquito in Gibraltar and provide updated public health risk assessment advice.



During the visit, a number of sentinel sites were surveyed using mosquito traps and ovitraps across Gibraltar. Traps were run over two weeks to determine density of a number of key mosquito species with public health relevance. This replicated the 2021 survey to monitor change in densities as the invasive mosquitoes become more established. This work was done in collaboration with members of the Environmental Agency and staff at the Botanical Gardens.

In total over 1,100 mosquitoes were collected, predominantly *Aedes albopictus* and *Culex pipiens*. When compared with the previous visit in 2021, more mosquitoes were collected in fewer trap nights, which is consistent with other European countries that have reported an increase in mosquitoes this year. Working with the local team was a great opportunity to continue to support surveillance, as well as adding to an existing dataset to support local public and environmental health efforts to understand the potential hotspots for mosquitoes and future disease risk.

Historic lab accreditation at BVI hospital

Congratulations to colleagues in the Virgin Islands (British) for their efforts in achieving full lab accreditation status across the hospital. The Dr D Orlando Smith hospital has been granted accreditation from the esteemed accrediting body DNV-GL, and has become the recipient of a comprehensive three-year accreditation certificate. The DNV-GL accreditation integrates NIAHO standards with ISO 9001 and ISO 15189 standards for healthcare and medical laboratories, respectively. The UKOTs programme is supported in the preparation for this accreditation last year, when the UKOT Laboratory Technical and Quality Manager deployed to work with the BVI Quality Manager on a pre inspection gap analysis of ISO 15189 standards and supported planning for laboratory relocation.



Feature: New course on infectious disease management in places of detention

Consultant Sunita Sturup-Toft, and others at UKHSA, have collaborated with WHO Europe's Health In Prison Programme and Yale University's SEICHE Centre for Health and Justice to deliver a course on the Coursera platform for people who work in prisons to consider the principles of a resilient prison health system, how prisons contribute to health security, and the actions that individuals can take to influence improvements in the prevention and management of infectious diseases in places of detention. The course looks at actions around prevention, preparation, detection, response and building connections with the wider public health systems in country.

For more information about the course and to register your interest, please see <https://www.who.int/italy/events/item/2023/09/25/default-calendar/who-europe-training-course-for-prison-health-care-workers-prevention-and-management-of-infectious-diseases-in-places-of-detention>

Network Spotlight: UKOT Health Promotion Network

The health promotion call on 12th September bought the NCD Risk Factor series (which had previously covered tobacco, diet, physical activity and air pollution) to a close, focusing on alcohol policy. Laura Mahon, Deputy Chief Executive of Alcohol Focus Scotland spoke on her experience of developing and implementing Scotland's alcohol strategy and the lessons for other countries. There was a lot of interest from attendees regarding the strategy, which includes over 40 measures which have successfully reduced alcohol related harm in Scotland.

The strategy uses WHO's SAFER initiative and includes: Minimum Unit Pricing, limiting the time that alcohol is available, prohibiting multi-buy offers, lowering the drink driving limit, changing the licensing system, establishing alcohol early brief interventions, setting out parameters for managing conflict of interest with the alcohol industry to minimise industry interference in policy making.

If you would like to be invited to future calls on similar topics, please contact UKOTs.programme@ukhsa.gov.uk

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