

Epidemiology Update

Rheumatic Fever in Bay of Plenty and Lakes District Health Board areas

Two recent reports (Loring, 2008 and Gray, 2009) have highlighted the relatively high incidence of acute rheumatic fever in the Bay of Plenty and Lakes District Health Board (DHB) areas. Key points describing the epidemiology are noted below:

- The annual incidence of acute rheumatic fever in children in Lakes DHB (22/100,000) is nearly double the New Zealand rate, and in the Bay of Plenty DHB (34/100,000) it is nearly three times the New Zealand rate. These rates are higher than recently documented rates in many developing countries.
- Parts of the Eastern Bay of Plenty, particularly the towns of Opotiki, Kawerau and Murupara have among the world's highest recently documented rates of acute rheumatic fever in children (88-258/100,000).
- Most (84% - 89%) of the cases of rheumatic fever in the Bay of Plenty and Lakes DHBs are Māori. The relative risk of contracting rheumatic fever for Māori in the Bay of Plenty DHB is 21 times the risk for non-Māori. The risk for Māori in Lakes DHB is 12 times that for non-Māori. Māori have a significantly greater incidence of ARF in Lakes DHB than is experienced for Māori nationally.
- Approximately 10% to 12% of ARF cases in the Bay of Plenty and Lakes DHBs are recurrences. These could mostly have been prevented by optimum secondary prevention.

References:

Loring, B. (2008). *Rheumatic Fever in the Bay of Plenty and Lakes District Health Boards: A review of the evidence and recommendations for action*. Toi Te Ora - Public Health, Tauranga.

Gray, G. (2009). *Epidemiology of Acute Rheumatic Fever in Lakes DHB 1998-2007*. Toi Te Ora - Public Health, Tauranga.