

Clinical characteristics and national economic cost of the 2005 dengue epidemic in Panama.

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In 2005, Panama experienced the largest dengue epidemic since 1993. We conducted both a prospective clinical and a national economic study. The full cost analysis measured costs of dengue cases and of dengue control efforts in the entire country. Costs are in 2005 US\$. Ambulatory patients were 130 of the 136 participants, with 82% adults (18+) and 62% women. Duration of fever and illness averaged 6.1 (standard deviation [SD], 5.3) and 21.2 (SD 13.5) days, respectively. Loss in quality of life averaged 67% (SD 21) during the worst days of illness. An average ambulatory and hospitalized case cost \$332 and \$1,065, respectively. Although 5,489 cases were officially reported, the Ministry of Health (MOH) estimated 32,900 actual cases, implying a total cost of \$11.8 million. Additionally, estimated government spending on dengue control efforts was \$5 million. This dengue epidemic had a major disease impact and an economic cost of \$16.9 million (\$5.22 per capita).