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Trends and Geographical Distribution of Snakebite Cases in Uganda, 2020–2024: An Analysis of National Surveillance Data

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Snakebites are a neglected public health challenge in Uganda. Adverse outcomes of snakebites include paralysis, disfigurement, limb amputation and death. Uganda's Neglected Tropical Diseases Master Plan, 2023-2027, aligns with WHO's target to reduce snakebite mortality and disability by 50% by 2030. We described trends and distribution of snakebite cases in Uganda from 2020–2024 to inform snakebite prevention and control strategies.

We analysed snakebite cases reported through DHIS2 from January 2020–December 2024 defining cases as snakebite injuries with puncture wounds regardless of envenomation status. Annual incidence per million population was calculated by age, sex, year, and district using UBOS projections. Trends were assessed using Mann-Kendall and rainfall-incidence associations using Spearman correlation.

A total of 50,011 cases were reported (mean incidence 250/million). Adults ≥ 20 years had the highest incidence (320/million), and females had slightly higher incidence than males (250 vs 240/million, $p < 0.001$). Annual incidence ranged 210–260/million with no significant trend ($p = 0.22$). West Nile and Acholi regions consistently exceeded 1,000/million. Rainfall showed a weak negative correlation with incidence, significant only in 2022 ($\rho = -0.22$, $p = 0.008$).

Snakebites disproportionately affect adults and females, with the highest burden in Northern Uganda. Strengthening community awareness and antivenom access could reduce morbidity and guide resource allocation.

Keywords

Snakebite, Incidence, Uganda, Neglected Tropical Disease

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Professional Status of the Speaker

Graduate Student

Junior Scientist Status

No, I am not a Junior Scientist.

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