SEROEPIDEMIOLOGY OF HTLV-I IN IVORY COAST


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Objective: To evaluate the HTLV-I prevalence and to identify risk groups in Ivory Coast.

Methods: Approximatively 3000 sera from different groups (symptomless individuals, prostitutes, hospitalized patients, prisoners, etc...) and several regions of Ivory Coast were tested for antibody to HTLV-I by an indirect immunofluorescence assay using the HUT 102 B2 cell line. The confirmations of doubtful and positive sera were obtained by Western blot using the same HTLV-I strain. Sera were considered as positive for antibody to HTLV-I when reactive to the gag encoded proteins p19 and p24.

Results: The prevalence in the healthy adult population was 1.6% (1.5% for the males and 1.7% for the females), with the same prevalence in either rural (1.7%) or urban area (1.5%). The prevalence in the prostitutes groups varied from 5.7% to 10.5% in three areas and was decreasing with increasing socioeconomic level. The prevalences for diabetic patients and transfused patients with sickle cell anemia were 1.8% and 3.8%, respectively. The seroprevalence for patients with tuberculosis was 3.8%.

The highest prevalences were observed in neurologic patients (10.5%) and lepers (13.8%). The seroprevalence increases with age from 0.6% to 14.3% in the general population.

Conclusion: This study shows that HTLV-I is widely spread in Ivory Coast. The evaluation of the risk of coexposures to HTLV-I, HIV-I, HIV-2 is under study.