

The magnitude and distribution of infectious intestinal disease in Malta: a population-based study

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Abstract

Routine sources of information on infectious intestinal disease (IID) capture a fraction of the actual disease burden. Population studies are required to measure the burden of illness. A retrospective age-stratified cross-sectional telephone study was carried out in Malta in order to estimate the magnitude and distribution of IID at population level. A random sample of 3504 persons was interviewed by a structured questionnaire between April 2004 and December 2005. The response rate was 99.7%. From the study, the observed standardized monthly prevalence was 3.18% (95% CI 0.7–5.74) with 0.421 (95% CI 0.092–0.771) episodes of IID per person per year. The monthly prevalence was higher in the <5 years age group and in females aged 31–44 years. The mean duration of illness was 6.8 days and a median duration of 3 days. A bimodal seasonal distribution was observed with peaks in June–July and October–November.

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