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### Emerging trend of leishmaniosis in Pakistan: Current status and future prospects

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Leishmaniosis is a disease caused by a *Leishmania* protozoan parasite, which is transmitted by the bite of an infected sand fly. Leishmaniasis is among the most dangerous and neglected tropical diseases. In Pakistan, limited research work has been done yet on this neglected disease. Overall cases of leishmaniasis were retrieved from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and Baluchistan provinces from 2018 to 2019. The major risk factors responsible for these outbreaks were also determined. Recent outbreak resulted in more than 28 000 cases of leishmaniasis in KPK from November 2018 to April 2019. Many of the cases were children and approximately 7 810 diagnosed patients did not receive treatment with meglumine antimoniate. Leishmaniasis cases were also identified in the tribal areas of Khyber ( $n=9\ 378$ ), Mohmand ( $n=5\ 373$ ), Kurram ( $n=525$ ), Orakzai ( $n=163$ ), and Karak ( $n=554$ ). In Balochistan, around ( $n=5\ 000$ ) cases of leishmaniasis were reported in 2018 from the District of Killa Abdulla. The poor infrastructure and sanitary conditions increase the breeding and resting sites of sandflies. The local population's poor socio-economic conditions increase access to sandflies and the risk of acquiring leishmaniasis. In Pakistan, leishmaniasis is currently neglected by the health authorities, largely due to a lack of data on the number of cases and the monetary and non-monetary impacts that these cases are having on the country. There is a dire need for outreach activities to provide information to communities about the disease and preventive measures. This is a call to the national and international research communities, and to the WHO, to take notice of the threat of leishmaniasis in Pakistan and to help devise a strategy to address this neglected yet important public health problem.

**Keywords:** Leishmaniasis; Status; Outbreak; Pakistan

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