



# Leptospirosis : A Disease of Public Health Importance

■ VANDANA GUPTA AND NEERU BALA

See end of the paper for authors' affiliation

**Correspondence to :**

VANDANA GUPTA  
Department of Foods and Nutrition, Ethelind School of Home Science, Sam Higginbottom Institute of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences, ALLAHABAD (U.P.) INDIA  
Email: vandu.v.23@gmail.com

**ABSTRACT :** Leptospirosis has been recognized as an important emerging global public health problem because of its epidemic proportions and increasing incidence in both developing and developed countries. The disease is endemic in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Andaman, Karnataka, Maharashtra. It has also been reported from Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Puducherry. It is an infectious disease caused by pathogenic bacteria called leptospire which has over 20 serogroups and more than 200 serovars. Man is infected either directly through contact with an infected animal or indirectly by water or soil contaminated with the urine of an infected animal. Human-to-human transmission occurs only very rarely. Leptospirosis can manifest in many ways. Clinical diagnosis is difficult because of the varied and non-specific presentation. In this situation, ELISA tests is particularly useful in making early diagnosis. Other serological tests available are indirect fluorescent antibody test (IFAT), indirect hemagglutination tests (IHAT), latex agglutination tests (LAT), micro capsule agglutination tests (MicAT), counter immune-electrophoresis (CIE) and CFT etc. Antibiotic treatment is effective within 7 to 10 days of infection and it should be given immediately on diagnosis or suspicion. In severe cases, admission to a hospital is necessary. Identification of the potential risk factors would help understand the transmission dynamics of the disease and formulate public health interventions.

**KEY WORDS :**

Leptospirosis, Outbreak, Clinical diagnosis, Risk factors

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