

GIARDIASIS

CRUDE DATA	
Number of Cases	579
Annual Incidence ^a	
LA County	6.3
United States	N/A
Age at Onset	
Mean	24
Median	16
Range	0-97
Case Fatality	
LA County	0.2%
United States	N/A

^aCases per 100,000 population.

ETIOLOGY

Giardiasis is caused by ingestion of cysts of the protozoan parasite *Giardia lamblia*.

DISEASE ABSTRACT

The year 1999 had the lowest rate of giardiasis ever in Los Angeles County. There were no reported giardiasis outbreaks.

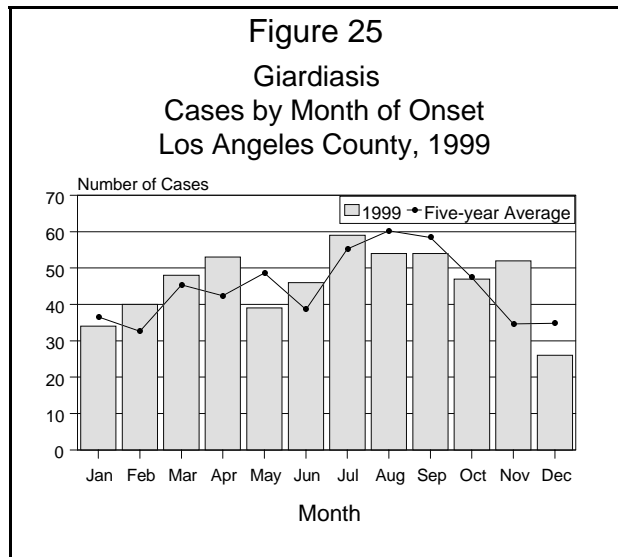
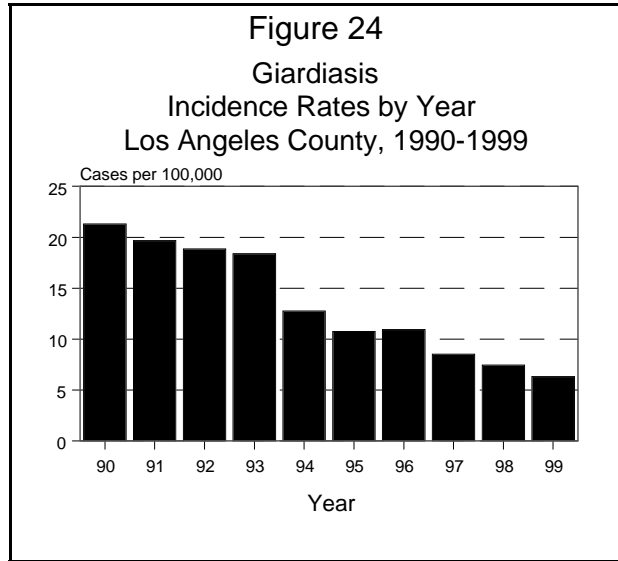
STRATIFIED DATA

Trends: The rate of giardiasis has dropped annually since its 1989 high point of 21.7 cases per 100,000. The 1999 incidence was the lowest since 1981 (Figure 24).

Seasonality: The typical late summer peak of cases was evident in 1999 (Figure 25).

Age: The age-specific incidence of giardiasis was greatest in children aged 1-4 years (20.9 per 100,000) followed by children aged 5-14 years (11.2 per 100,000) (Figure 26). For both age groups, these rates were lower than those of the previous year.

Sex: The male-to-female rate ratio fell slightly from 1.4:1 to 1.3:1.



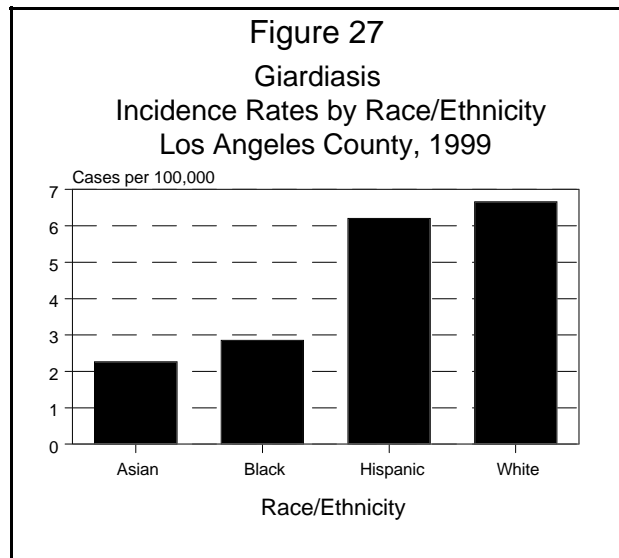
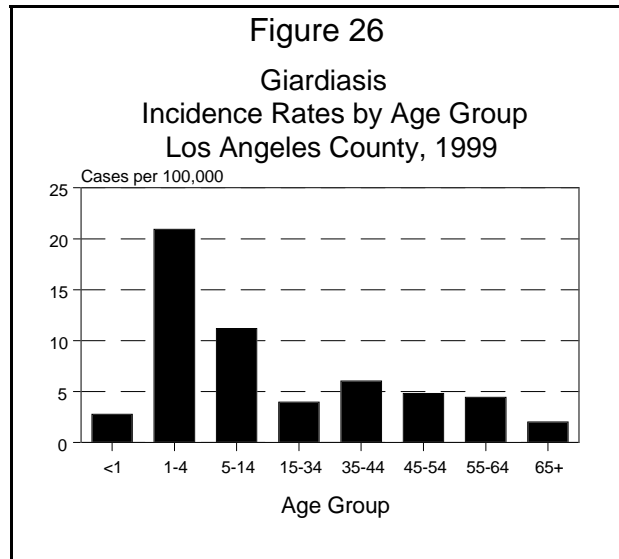
Race/Ethnicity: Rates for Hispanics and Whites were substantially higher than those of Asians and Blacks (Figure 27).

Location: San Fernando and Torrance Districts had rates double the county average (12.7 and 12.4 per 100,000, respectively); Hollywood-Wilshire and Harbor Districts also had rates above 10.0 (Map 4).

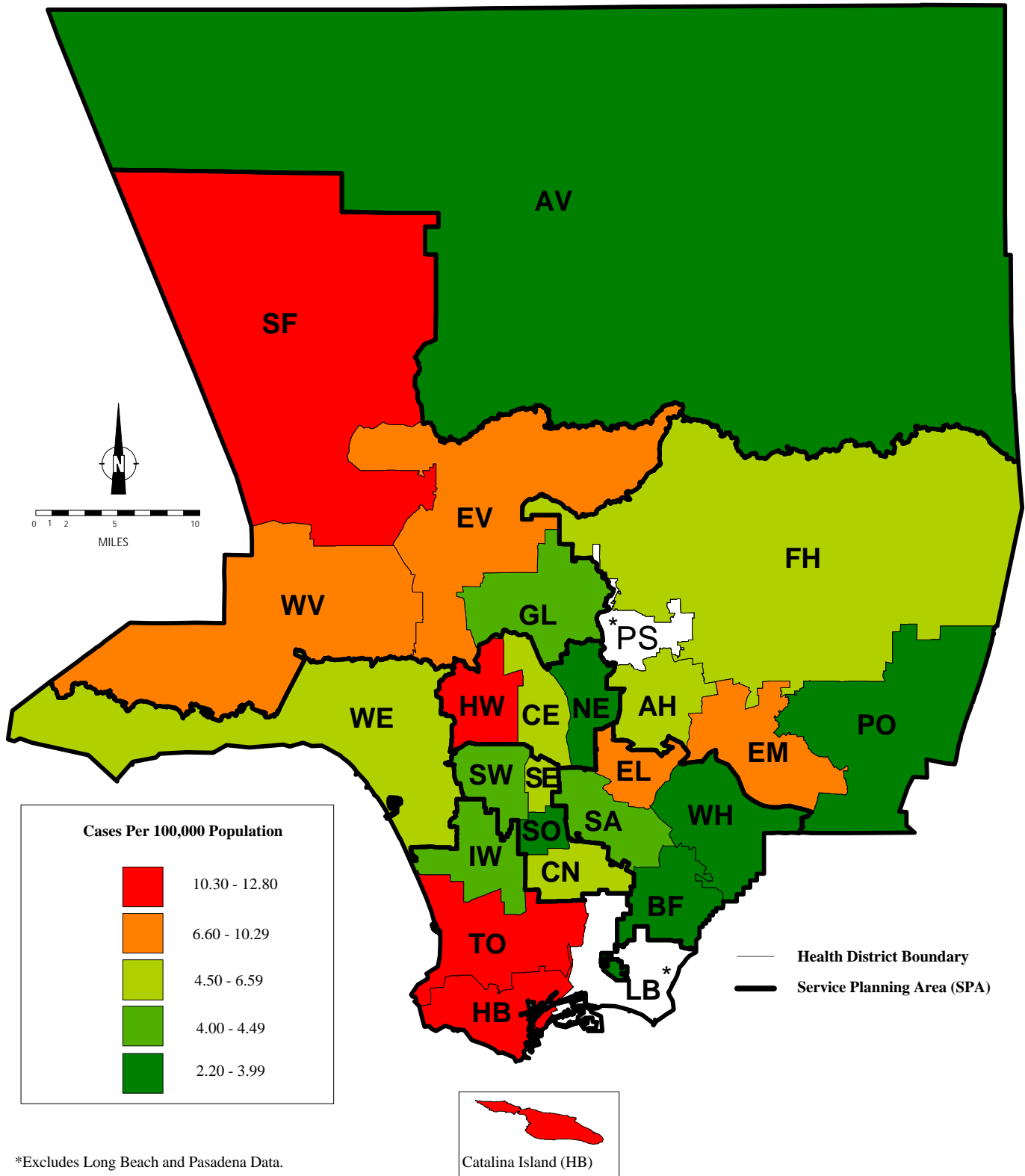
Comment: Risk factors for giardiasis were summarized for the first time in 1999. Two thirds of cases were interviewed (389/579, 67%). Interviewed cases did not differ by race, sex, age group, or month of onset from those that were not located for interview. Because there is no control group to which these responses can be compared, caution should be used when interpreting this information.

The most commonly cited risk factors were: recent foreign travel (33%), outdoor camping (24%), other exposure to nonpotable water (15%), plumbing trouble (7.4%), and contact with children in day care (6.3%). The country most commonly visited was Mexico (60/128); Central American countries were named thirteen times, and nine cases were recent arrivals from the former Soviet Union. One third of cases were immigrants to the US, but the length of residence in this country was not provided. While a large proportion of cases claimed exposure to animals (44%), the nature of the exposure and type or health of the animal was not available.

Sexual orientation was stated on 96% (370/389) of interviews; 171 cases (46%) were not sexually active. Of the remainder, 52% (105/203) of male cases were sexually active, compared to only 40% (66/167) of female cases. Thirty percent (32) of sexually active male cases admitted to sex with other males (MSM), while only 3% of female cases (2) were homosexual. Among sexually active giardiasis cases, MSM were as likely as all remaining cases to have immigrated, gone camping, or been exposed to animals or untreated water. However, MSM were significantly less likely to have traveled to a foreign country recently (odds ratio 0.33, 95% confidence interval 0.10-0.97).



MAP 4. Giardiasis Rates by Health District, Los Angeles County, 1999*



*Excludes Long Beach and Pasadena Data.