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SENSITIVITY OF CASE DEFINITIONS IN SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE

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ABSTRACT

Syndromic surveillance is a primary health care-facility and emergency room (ER)-based syndromic surveillance system aiming at detecting outbreaks and undertaking public health actions. It is based on weekly notifications of nine syndromes by over 1,600 General Practitioners (GPs) in the 36 districts of Albania. Data is aggregated by district epidemiologists (DE) and centralized by the national Institute of Public Health. A syndrome is “a set of symptoms or conditions that occur together and suggest the presence of a certain disease or an increased chance of developing the disease.” In the context of syndromic surveillance, a syndrome is a set of non-specific pre-diagnosis medical and other information that may indicate the release of a bioterrorism agent or natural disease outbreak. Since its inception, syndromic surveillance has mainly focused on early event detection: gathering and analyzing data in advance of diagnostic case confirmation to give early warning of a possible outbreak. The system is useful for detecting and responding to natural disease outbreaks, and thus they have the potential to significantly advance and modernize the practice of public health surveillance

Keywords: public health, early event detection, sensitivity