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Surveillance of COVID-19 outbreak at Vila Central Hospital, Vanuatu, March-August 2022

Gilson Fangaria¹, Caroline Van Gemert², Philip Agwaiasi¹, Jen Hummelshoj¹, Graham Tasso¹, Pamina Manbit³

¹Vila Central Hospital, Ministry of Health, Port Vila, Vanuatu. ²Vanuatu Health Program, Port Vila, Vanuatu. ³Ministry of Health, Port Vila, Vanuatu.

Abstract

Introduction: Vila Central Hospital (VCH) is the national referral hospital in Vanuatu. On 4th March 2022, the first community case of COVID-19 in Vanuatu was detected in an admitted patient. VCH immediately established testing in all wards. The Infection Prevention and Control Unit was tasked to activate surveillance and report daily COVID-19 cases, hospitalisations and deaths. The purpose of this study was to describe hospitalisations for COVID-19 at VCH from March to August 2022.

Methods: All people presenting to the ED or admitted to VCH were tested for COVID-19 on arrival/admission and the result was recorded in the admission book. A surveillance officer visited all wards and collected COVID-19 status from admission books (daily from March to April and weekly May to August). An online surveillance database, go. Data, was used to record line-listed information for each case, including hospitalisations and outcome (recovery or death). COVID-19 related-deaths were reported via a VCH death verification committee with deaths recorded in go. Data.

Results: There were 214 cases hospitalised at VCH with COVID-19, among which 64 (29%) were admitted due to COVID-19 infection. 81 pregnant women were hospitalised with COVID-19, but only 1 for COVID-19. 50% of admissions for COVID-19 were fully vaccinated. 68% of hospitalised cases were female and the average age was 32 years. 74% of all hospitalised cases had mild severity but 37% of cases hospitalised for COVID-19 had severe infection. Six people died due to COVID-19 at VCH. The peak hospitalisation rate was in Epi Week 9 and has steadily decreased since.

Discussion: There was a high percentage of mild infections. Challenges to documentation and reporting in wards was experienced and this may have led to underestimates of the true number of hospitalised patients. A limitation of the surveillance database is lack of detailed clinical and management information; electronic patient records would be useful to improve data and reporting.