

KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES ABOUT THE DENGUE VIRUS IN GRADE SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE HEALTH DISTRICT OF GARABITO, COSTA RICA

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Written surveys were distributed to 321 fifth and sixth graders in the district of Garabito, Costa Rica about their knowledge of, and attitudes towards, the dengue virus. Current literature discusses adult perceptions of dengue in this region, but fails to address minors. This study revealed a misunderstanding of the type of water preferred by the dengue mosquito, *Aedes aegypti*, as well as a widespread belief that the ministry of health is responsible for preventing the disease. Experience with dengue was the factor most strongly related to knowledge of and attitudes towards dengue, which were subsequently associated with the frequency of preventative behaviors. This research provides a foundation for evaluating and augmenting the effectiveness of dengue education programs. Significant related variables include:

- Knowledge of preferred water type was strongly, positively correlated with the students' level of dengue experience ($F=5.88$; $df=1, 314$; $P=0.0159$; $R^2=1.84\%$).
- Frequency of elimination of breeding sites was strongly, positively related to student feelings toward dengue ($F=6.98$; $df=1, 312$; $P=0.0087$; $R^2=2.18\%$).
- Attitude scores were strongly, positively related to knowledge scores ($F=13.00$; $df=1, 318$; $P=0.0004$; $R^2=3.93\%$).