VL Surveyor Methodology

The visceral leishmaniasis (VL) Surveyor maps all the relevant registered and published VL clinical trials looking at efficacy of pharmaceuticals, conducted globally to date.

Created in 2016, the Surveyor includes data derived from a systematic review\(^1\) conducted in the same year. In addition to the data from this systematic review, the Surveyor is regularly updated with details of newly-registered and published trials, obtained from frequently-updated systematic searches scheduled every 6 months. The latest update search was conducted on 9 November 2020 and the Surveyor currently contains summary data from 180 clinical trials registered and/or published since 1983 (over 30,000 patients).

The methodology used in the review and for the regular updates of the Surveyor is elaborated below.

**Literature search:**

The following clinical trials registries and publication repositories were queried for all registered VL trials to date:

- clinicaltrials.gov
- WHO International Clinical Trials Registry Platform (ICTRP)
- The Cochrane Library and PubMed
- PubMed

To conform to current systematic review best practice, all update searches from January 2016 forward were expanded to include results from these additional repositories.

- Embase
- Scopus
- Global Index Medicus
- IMEMR
- IMSEAR
- LILACS
- Web of Science

Details of the search strategy used by the database can be found below.

**Eligibility screening:**

- Publications and trials describing studies on cutaneous leishmaniasis, post kala-azar dermal leishmaniasis (PKDL), canine VL, vector control, nets, prevalence estimation, diagnostic tests, vaccines or prophylaxis were excluded.
- Non-intervention studies, case reports, retrospective studies and individual studies enrolling fewer than six patients were also excluded.
- No restriction was placed on the date or language.
- Screening was performed using Covidence systematic review software.\(^2\)

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2. Veritas Health Innovation, Melbourne, Australia. Available at www.covidence.org
Visualisation details:

- Each trial is represented by a pin on the map corresponding to the study site. Each pin can be clicked to produce a pop-up box, which presents more information about the trial. Within the pop-up boxes there are links to the publications which link directly to PubMed. The pins are coloured according to the status of the trial (e.g. published, completed, active, withdrawn, unknown and terminated).

The information for the unpublished trials has been obtained from the respective clinical trial registries.

- The filters on the left-hand side can be enabled to restrict the trials according to their status, the drugs used, the country they were conducted in, the diagnostic method used, the inclusion of participants with HIV co-infection and the trial design.

- Below the map, there are further filters that allow the user to explore the trials performed at specific time periods and restrict according to the number of patients enrolled in trials.

- The “Get the data” button downloads a spreadsheet containing all the data presented on the VL Surveyor along with an open database license agreement.

- This is a fast-evolving field of research and therefore the rules and filters will be adapted to reflect new information as it is received.

If you have any comments or suggestions in regards to the VL Surveyor, please let us know at vl@iddo.org.
A systematic review of clinical trials assessing the therapeutic efficacy of visceral leishmaniasis treatments

Search Strategies for 2016 – 9 November 2020

**Pubmed**


- This search strategy uses the PubMed RCT filter for sensitivity- and precision-maximising version (2008). [https://work.cochrane.org/pubmed](https://work.cochrane.org/pubmed)

**Database: Embase 1974 to present**

Search Strategy:

```
1 exp visceral leishmaniasis/ (9032)
2 "black fever".ti,ab. (16)
3 "kala azar".ti,ab. (2138)
4 "visceral leishmaniasis".ti,ab. (8713)
5 1 or 2 or 3 or 4 (11608)
6 exp randomized controlled trial/ (546363)
7 Controlled clinical study/ (461844)
8 Random$,ti,ab. (1401563)
9 randomization/ (82089)
10 intermethod comparison/ (246778)
11 placebo.ti,ab. (286120)
12 (compare or compared or comparison).ti. (477335)
13 ((evaluated or evaluate or evaluating or assessed or assess) and (compare or compared or comparing or comparison)).ab. (1903401)
14 (open adj label).ti,ab. (70475)
15 ((double or single or doubly or singly) adj (blind or blinded or blindly)).ti,ab. (217393)
16 double blind procedure/ (159727)
```
This search strategy uses the Cochrane RCT filter for Embase.

https://www.cochranelibrary.com/central/central-creation

Scopus

({TITLE-ABS-KEY ("visceral leishmaniasis" OR "kala azar" OR "black fever")}) AND ({TITLE-ABS-KEY (random* OR rct OR placebo OR allocat* OR crossover* OR "cross over" OR trial OR (doubl* W/1 blind*) OR (singl* W/1 blind*))}) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (control* W/1 trial*)) OR (TITLE-ABS-KEY (cohort*)) OR ((TITLE-ABS-KEY ("visceral leishmaniasis" OR "kala azar" OR "black fever")) AND (TITLE-ABS-KEY (pentamidine OR ambisome OR amphotericin OR paromomycin OR miltefosine OR pentavalent OR sodium OR sitamaquine OR azole* OR allopurinol OR atovaquone OR ketoconazole OR fluconazole OR metronidazole)))) AND (EXCLUDE (EXACTKEYWORD, "Animals") OR EXCLUDE (EXACTKEYWORD, "Animal") OR EXCLUDE (EXACTKEYWORD, "Animal Experiment") OR EXCLUDE (EXACTKEYWORD, "Mouse") OR EXCLUDE (EXACTKEYWORD, "Mice") OR EXCLUDE (EXACTKEYWORD, "Dogs") )

Web of Science Core Collection

1. TOPIC: ("visceral leishmaniasis" OR "kala azar" OR "black fever")
2. TOPIC: (random* OR rct OR placebo OR allocat* OR crossover* OR "cross over" OR trial OR (doubl* near/1 blind*) OR (singl* near/1 blind*))
3. TOPIC: (control* near/1 trial*)
4. TOPIC: (cohort*)
5. #4 OR #3 OR #2
6. #5 AND #1
7. TOPIC: (pentamidine OR ambisome OR amphotericin OR paromomycin OR miltefosine OR pentavalent OR sodium OR sitamaquine OR azole* OR allopurinol OR atovaquone OR ketoconazole OR fluconazole OR metronidazole)
8. #7 AND #1
The searches were divided into four stages:

1. Clinical trial registries clinicaltrials.gov and ICTRP were queried with the search terms 'visceral leishmaniasis' and 'kala azar'.
2. PubMed was searched using the search term 'Visceral Leishmaniasis' and applying the 'article type' filter 'clinical trial'.
3. A broader search of PubMed (for the updates, Embase, Scopus, and Web of Science were also searched) was conducted using the query ‘((kala AND azar) OR (visceral AND leishmaniasis)) AND (pentamidine OR ambisome OR amphotericin OR paromomycin OR miltefosine OR pentavalent OR sodium)’.
4. The Cochrane library was searched using the search term 'Visceral Leishmaniasis' and applying the 'article type' filter 'clinical trial'.

Refer to Bush et al., 2017 for further details: