

## Presenting features of Rhodesian sleeping sickness patients in the Lambwe Valley in Kenya.

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### **Abstract:**

During a recent outbreak of Rhodesian sleeping sickness in the Lambwe Valley no asymptomatic Rhodesian sleeping sickness patients were found although 54% of the primary patients had mild symptoms and 9% were stuporous or comatose at presentation. The duration of symptoms was three months or less in 90% of the patients. Headache, weakness, joint and back pains and weight loss were claimed by at least 75% of the patients, while 82% of the females reported amenorrhoea and 70% of the males claimed impotency. Physical examination revealed lymphadenopathy in 86% but fever in only 36% of the patients, while chancres were found in only 16%. Patients had significantly lower levels of haemoglobin and thrombocytes than controls and their erythrocyte sedimentation rates were elevated. A comparison of both blood group and haemoglobin type between patients and controls yielded no significant differences. Fifty-seven per cent of the primary patients reporting mild symptoms had abnormal levels of leucocytes in their CSF. All relapse patients had abnormal CSF parameters. Levels of serum urea nitrogen were significantly elevated in patients, but SGOT, SGPT and total bilirubin were not. Levels of albumin and beta-globulin in patients were significantly lower than controls while gamma-globulin was elevated. Mean serum IgM levels in patients were elevated to nearly three-fold those of controls, but 35% of the individual patient values fell within the 95% range of control values. Some patients had extended prothrombin and thrombin times while fibrinogen levels were significantly elevated. No patients reported haemorrhage, and none was seen.