

For more on the **Belt and Road Network for the Elimination and Control of Echinococcosis and Cysticercosis** see <http://br-nec.ipd.org.cn/about.php>

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Walk together to combat echinococcosis

Epidemiological data on echinococcosis are inadequate, hindering the implementation of interventions to control the disease. Thus, the ultrasound-based survey by Francesca Tamarozzi and colleagues¹ is important and adds to the knowledge base on the global epidemiology of echinococcosis. The authors' large

epidemiological survey involving 24 681 participants in rural Bulgaria, Romania, and Turkey led to an estimate of about 151 000 echinococcosis cases. On the one hand, this research provides a clearer map of echinococcosis in eastern European. On the other hand, it highlights the substantial gap between cases reported to surveillance systems and the real-world affected population.

The importance of using reliable data to control echinococcosis has been recently demonstrated in China. As a highly endemic country, echinococcosis is included in the national surveillance for infectious diseases in China. From 2004 to 2017, 41 081 echinococcosis cases were reported through China's surveillance system (figure).² These were usually severe cases from hospitals and thus could not reflect the true burden of echinococcosis in China. Therefore, between 2012 and 2016, China initiated the largest epidemiological survey³ of echinococcosis to date, covering all nine endemic provinces in western China. The survey found that cystic echinococcosis was endemic in 368 counties, of which 115 were co-endemic for alveolar echinococcosis. In total, 1 001 173 participants from 364 endemic counties accepted ultrasound examination and 166 098 echinococcosis cases were estimated nationally. This national survey prompted a significant increase

in the number of echinococcosis cases reported to the national surveillance system (figure). In particular, clear targets have been set and concrete measurements are being implemented for echinococcosis in western China.⁴

Thus, to combat echinococcosis, a global database needs to be established. In late 2017, the Belt and Road Network for the Elimination and Control of Echinococcosis and Cysticercosis (B&R-NEC) was established in Chengdu, China. This network aims to build capacity for the research and development needed to achieve the control targets for echinococcosis, as well as those for *Taenia solium* cysticercosis, by 2030 through the commitment, coordination, and cooperation of all endemic countries and the international community. Experts from 13 countries, including Turkey, have signed the Chengdu Declaration to combat echinococcosis and cysticercosis. The B&R-NEC is open and more countries are welcome to join us to combat echinococcosis together.

We declare no competing interests.

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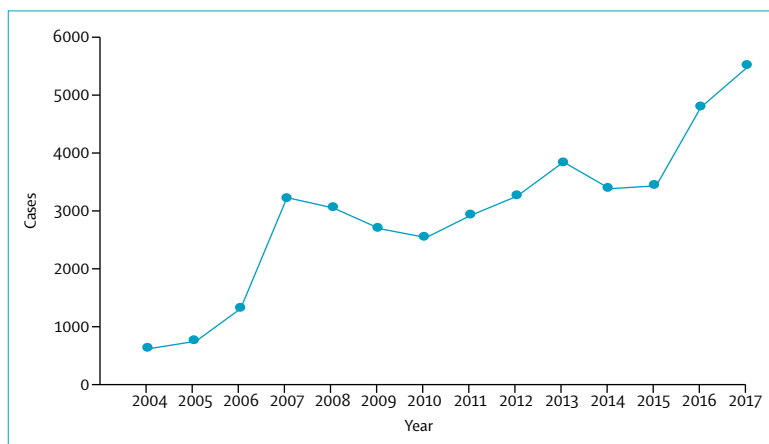


Figure: Reported echinococcosis cases in China through national surveillance

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