

Characteristic distribution of HTLV type I and HTLV type II carriers among native ethnic groups in South America

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To confirm the geographic and ethnic segregation of HTLV-I and HTLV-II carriers in native populations in South America, we have conducted a seroepidemiological study of native populations in South America, including HTLV-I carriers distributed among seven ethnic groups in the Andes highlands of Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, and Chile, and two ethnic groups on Chiloe Island and Easter Island; and HTLV-II carriers distributed among seven ethnic groups of the lowlands along the Atlantic coast of Colombia, Orinoco, Amazon, and Patagonia, and one ethnic group on Chiloe Island. The incidence rate of HTLV-I and HTLV-II carriers varied among the ethnic groups, ranging from 0.8 to 6.8% for HTLV-I seropositivity and from 1.4 to 57.9% for HTLV-II seropositivity. A new HTLV-I focus was found among the Peruvian Aymara (1.6%), the Bolivian Aymara (5.3%)

and Quechua (4.5%), the Argentine Puna (2.3%), and the Chilean Atacama (4.1%), while on HTLV-II focus was found among the Brazilian Kayapo (57