

# An outbreak of hantavirus pulmonary syndrome in western Paraguay

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During an investigation of hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS) in Paraguay in 1995, sera from persons with HPS-like illness, household contacts of confirmed HPS case-patients, and a sample of the area residents were analyzed by ELISA for antibodies to Sin Nombre virus (SNV). Rodent serosurveys and analysis of precipitation records were also conducted. Twenty-three of 24 available probable cases were SNV antibody-positive, 17 of whom were ill between July 1995 and January 1996. Four (14.8%) of 27 case- contacts and 44 (12.8%) of 345 community residents were also seropositive. *Calomys laucha* (vesper mouse) was the most common rodent species captured and the most frequently SNV-seropositive. Rainfall in May 1995 was 10-fold greater than that seen in May over the preceding 11 years. This 17 case- cluster represents the largest documented outbreak since HPS was first recognized in 1993. *Calomys laucha* is the likely primary rodent reservoir for a SNV-like hantavirus in western Paraguay. Fluct