Australian Government
Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research

Establishing the linkages between foodborne bacterial enteropathies and malnutrition in Timor-Leste

Key details

Location
Timor-Leste

Duration
Start Jan 2019 **End** Jun 2021

Budget AUD 250,000

Commissioned organisation
Australian National University

Partners
Australian National University; Royal Darwin Hospital/Menzies School of Health Research; Hospital Nacional Guido Valadares, Dili, Timor-Leste

Project Leader
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Program Livestock Systems

Project code LS/2018/184

Overview

This project aimed to develop hypotheses on infection pathways, with a view to undertaking a large-scale study on the sources and effects of enteropathogen infections and stunting in Timor-Leste.

Stunting (low height/length for age), wasting (low weight for height/length) and underweight (low weight for age) are internationally recognised markers of child malnutrition and are commonly observed in children in low and middle income countries. There are many socio-economic and environmental factors that contribute to malnutrition; however, one that has only been explored recently is enteropathogen infection. There is growing evidence of an association between infectious gastroenteritis and malnutrition in low-income countries.

This study sought to develop a better understanding of the relationship between malnutrition and enteropathogen infections in infants in Timor-Leste and the contribution of social, zoonotic, and environmental factors affecting their transmission.

The research will generate hypotheses on potential sources of gastrointestinal infections, and determine the feasibility of a larger study to investigate associations between these infections and malnutrition in Timor-Leste.

The results will be provided to public health practitioners and the local community at a workshop

and via dissemination of a final report.

Project outcomes

- Developed a better understanding of the relationship(s) between malnutrition and enteropathogen infections in infants and children in Timor-Leste.
- Determined the potential contribution of social, zoonotic, and environmental factors in human enteropathogen infections in a small sample of infants in Timor-Leste.
- Built capacity in human and animal public health laboratory diagnosis, surveillance, and outbreak detection and investigation for enteropathogens in Timor-Leste.