

Poster Abstract

- Quality of life impacts of bed bug (*Cimex lectularius* L.) infestations

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Living with bed bugs can cause economic, social and human health costs. A coalition of institutions created an online survey to: (1) identify risk factors associated with infestations; (2) document specific stresses attributed to bed bugs; and (3) compare pest management practices. Data were collected from residents in the US who had experienced, were currently experiencing, and had never experienced infestations. First quarter analysis (n=289) indicated that people with lower annual income reported more infestations; 42.3% of residents had pest control experts identify the insects while 38.0% used internet/literature resources; and 16.7% of residents with bite reactions required medical treatment. Results showed 25.7% had changed residence 2-3 times in 5 years, compared to 27.6% with a history of bed bugs, and 17.9% with no history. Residents with no bed bug history stay with friends/family less often, and host visitors less often. Residents with infestations are twice as likely to have acquired second hand articles two or more times per year, compared to residents with a past history of bed bugs. Residents with bed bug experience reported sleep loss (88.5%); 37.5% could not fulfill work duties as well as usual; 16.7% could not care for dependents as well as usual; 63.9% reported financial losses. Those with infestations felt isolated (47.2%) and 26.9% who no longer had bed bugs still felt isolated. Infestations were associated with an increase in alcohol consumption, smoking, prescription and illicit drug use; 26.4% of residents reported a decline in health and 23.5% with bed bugs reported using do-it-yourself treatments with hazardous chemicals.