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## Knowledge, attitudes and practices survey after an outbreak of chikungunya infections

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### ABSTRACT

In 2007, the first chikungunya outbreak ever occurring in a temperate area of the Northern Hemisphere was reported in Emilia-Romagna, Italy. The present study aims to evaluate knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding chikungunya infection. Information was collected by standardised telephone questionnaire, administered to 325 people during a seroprevalence survey performed in the outbreak area. Most people (61%) knew that Chikungunya virus is transmitted through mosquito bites. A significant proportion of respondents perceived chikungunya infection as a high-risk disease (49.8%) and declared their intention to use mosquito repellents in the future (47.4%). Willingness to use skin repellents was more often declared by women, residents in households with children and people who knew infection transmission routes, while perception of high risk related to Chikungunya did not influence claimed future behaviour. Knowledge of the mechanisms of infection transmission was inversely related to risk perception: elderly people were less likely to know the disease than young people, but ranked the risk highest compared to younger age groups. Less educated residents were much more likely to perceive a high risk. After a chikungunya infection outbreak in a temperate area, where mosquito-borne infections have not been previously reported, only half of the study participants declared their intention to use individual protection in the future. Anticipated behaviour was not explained by the level of risk perception, but was associated with knowledge of the disease and demographic characteristics.