



General Country Information:

The Republic of Benin is located in western Africa, and borders Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria and Togo with a south coast along the Atlantic Ocean. Benin is divided in 12 departments and 77 communes. Porto Novo is the capital but the largest city and the seat of government is Cotonou (located in the department of Littoral).

Also known as the former kingdom of Dahomey, Benin became a French colony between 1899 and 1960 and gained its independence in August 1960. It was renamed The People's Republic of Benin in 1975 under a Marxist government that was to last until 1980. Benin is nowadays a multiparty republic.

During late April 2005, following a presidential election held in a tense climate, clashes in Lomé (Togo) lead to the exodus of 25 000 Togolese to Benin. The refugees lived both in local communities (15 000) and in camps (10 000 in Come and Lokossa). The camp in Come closed in August 2006, however the one in Lokossa remains open with an estimate of 6,000 refugees as of August 2007.

Benin is located in the meningitis belt and suffers from regular outbreaks of meningococcal disease.

Cholera Background History:

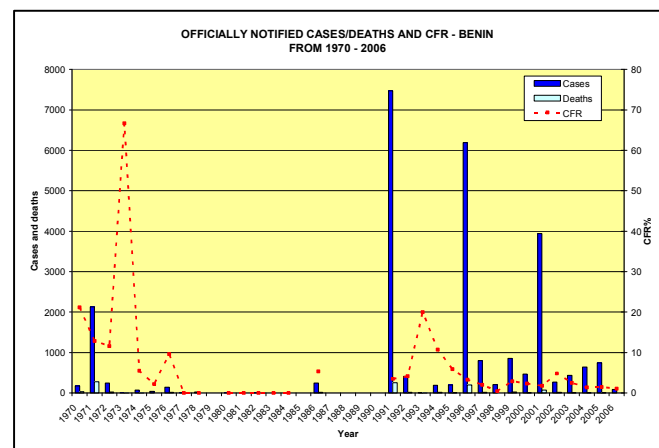
The first cholera outbreak in Benin was reported when the current pandemic hit the African continent in 1970.

Major outbreaks occurred in 1991, 1996 and 2001. In 1991, the largest outbreak in the country accounting for 7 474 cases and 259 deaths (case fatality rate of 3.47%) was reported. In 1996, 6 190 cases and 203 deaths were reported (CFR 3.28%).

In 2001, an outbreak accounting for 3 943 cases and 71 deaths (CFR 1.8%) was recorded. The outbreak started in July in the department of Borgou which reported 732 cases and 43 deaths during the first 3 weeks. The epidemic further spread in the departments of Zou (18 cases between 30 July and 5 August 2001) and Atlantique.

In 2005, between 1 January and 13 November, a total of 749 cases including 11 deaths (CFR 1.46%) were reported from 5 departments out of 12: Atlantique, Littoral, Mono, Ouémé and Zou. The outbreak started in Cotonou in June. By August it had spread to the department of Ouémé and by September Zou was also affected. Cotonou and its closest department Atlantique reported most of the cases (510), Zou reported 106 cases, Mono and Ouémé reported respectively 17 and 73 cases with no death. The weekly distribution of cholera cases, deaths and CFR between 1 Jan. and 13 Nov. 2005 is shown in Figure 1.

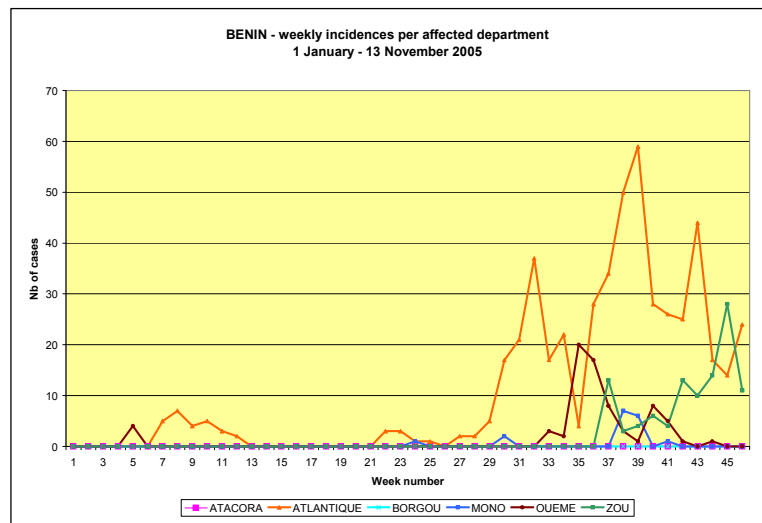
Communications between Cotonou and the departments of Atlantique, Ouémé and Zou involve both the rivers and roads.



In 2006, Benin reported 91 cases and 1 death (CFR of 1.1%) in the south of the country (departments of Mono, Atlantique and Ouémé) and in 2007, no cholera case was reported.



Figure 1



MoH-WHO Support Actions in 2005:

- Community mobilization to improve hygiene conditions
- Chlorination of water wells
- Free case management and treatment of patients

Demographic and Socio-Economic Data:

Geography	Total surface	112 622 km ² (coastline of 121km)
	Capital	Porto Novo (population in Porto Novo: 4 799 432)
	Departments	12
	Official Language	French
Environment	Climate	Hot and humid
	Rainy season	April-July and September-November but relatively little rain
	Floods and droughts	Inadequate supplies of potable water; poaching threatens wildlife populations;
	Desertification	Deforestation; desertification
Demographics	Natural resources	Small offshore oil deposits, limestone, marble, timber
	Population	8 439 000
	Religions	30% Christian, 20% Muslim and 50% indigenous religions
	Ethnic groups	Fon 39.2%, Adja 15.2%, Yoruba 12.3%, Bariba 9.2%, Fulani 7%, Ottamari 6.1%, Yoa-Lokpa 4%, Dendi 2.5%, other 1.6% (includes Europeans)
Economy	Migrants	25 000 refugees from Togo between April 2005 and August 2006
	Industry	Textiles, food processing, construction materials, cement
Health Indicators	Farming	Cotton, corn, cassava (tapioca), yams, beans, palm oil, peanuts, cashews; livestock
	Per capita total expenditure on health	36\$ (2003)
	Life expectancy birth (yrs)	Males: 52 Females: 53
Communicable Diseases	Child mortality (per 1000)	152
	<i>Food or waterborne diseases:</i>	bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever
	<i>Vectorborne diseases:</i>	malaria, yellow fever
Risk Factors for Cholera	<i>Respiratory disease:</i>	meningococcal meningitis (2007)
	HIV prevalence (2005):	1.6%
	Population with access to improved water source	67% (2004)
	Population with access to proper sanitation facilities	33% (2004)
Chronic Malnutrition	14% (2001-2003)	

Sources for Document: WHO, UN (MDG), UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP



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