MEASLES: RETURN TO GREECE

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Background and aims: Measles, a highly infectious viral disease prevented by vaccination, remains a cause of child mortality. 450 deaths/year worldwide. It is transmitted, mainly aerogenically, 4 days before up to 4 days after the rash is released.

Methods: 11 cases with measles were investigated in Hospital of Argos, aged 1.5 - 13 years, between 15/08/2017 - 15/09/2017. On suspicion of the disease, a specimen of pharyngeal smear and/or blood was sent to the Pasteur Institute to test the real time PCR of the virus and antibodies against the virus respectively.

Results: There were 4 (36.6%) males, with confirmed disease. 11 (100%) were unvaccinated and belonged to the population of Greek gypsies. Symptoms and signs were :

<i>Symptoms and signs</i>	<i>Number</i>
<i>Fever</i>	<i>11 (100%)</i>
<i>Rash</i>	<i>8 (72,7%)</i>
<i>Koplik spots</i>	<i>9 (81,8%)</i>
<i>Conjunctivitis</i>	<i>6 (54,5%)</i>
<i>Cough</i>	<i>9 (81,8%)</i>
<i>Rhinitis</i>	<i>9 (81,8%)</i>
<i>Vomiting-Diarrhea</i>	<i>3 (27,2%)</i>
<i>Headache</i>	<i>3 (27,2%)</i>

Where the rash had not occurred, there was strong suspicion of the disease due to occurrence in the family environment or certainty due to the presence of Koplik spots. In all patients, the disease was confirmed by real time PCR of the virus and/or antibodies against the virus from a pharyngeal swab and/or blood sample. Only 1 (9%) child needed hospitalization for hydration. All were cured without complications.

Conclusions : It is necessary to consider measles in our differential diagnosis due to the fact that preventive vaccination has weakened. The anti-vaccination movement has appeared in all population groups and we need to be vigilant so that patients can be diagnosed and supported promptly when needed. Non-vaccination with the measles vaccine should “alert us” for the outbreak of other diseases covered by the measles-rubella-mumps vaccine.