

Utilization of environmental and epidemiological indicators in the study of malaria dynamics

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Abstract

This paper aims to analyze the behavior of malaria transmission in the Amazon region based on climatic and environmental changes, such as temperature, precipitation and deforestation, through proposed modifications to the SIR and SEI models, in order to contribute to the study of applications of external effects on the evolution of the disease. The Trajetórias Project, developed by the Synthesis Center on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (SinBiose/CNPq) was used as an initial reference for the study. This work employs a modified SIR/SEI methodology, based on work from Parham and Michael (2010) which takes into account rainfall and temperature, with further modifications to avoid delay equations. Primary results show that the model is too sensible on some parameters, and using values indicated by other papers did not give the same results, opening up future work to compare the modified model equations with the originals. With the obtained results, it was possible to verify a strong effect caused by increased contact of host and vectors on the transmission of the disease.

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Keywords: Biological modelling, Malaria, Amazon, SIR, SEI

1. Introduction

The Amazon is one of the largest and most biodiverse tropical forests in the world, harboring numerous species of plants, animals, and microorganisms, including vectors and pathogens responsible for the transmission of various diseases. Among them, one of the most common is malaria, caused by protozoa of the genus *Plasmodium*, transmitted by the bite of the infected female mosquito of the genus *Anopheles*. It is present in 22 American countries, but the areas with the highest risk of infection are located in the Amazon region, encompassing nine countries, which accounted for 68% of infection cases in 2011 [1]. Although malaria is prevalent in the Americas, it is not limited to this continent and is found in countries in Africa and Asia, resulting in more than two million cases of infection and 445,000 deaths worldwide in 2016 [2].

Notably, vector-borne disease transmission is closely related to environmental changes that interfere with the ecosystem of both transmitting organisms and affected organisms. In the case of the Amazon, agricultural and livestock settlements are among the factors that most favor disease transmission, both due to the deforestation they cause for establishment and the clustering of people in environments close to the vector's habitat [3], especially by clustering non-immune migrants near these natural and artificial breeding sites [4].

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Additionally, other factors such as rainfall, wildfires, and mining also significantly influence disease transmission in the region. These events result in habitat loss, ecosystem fragmentation, and climate changes, affecting the distribution and abundance of vectors and hosts, as well as their interaction with pathogens. Furthermore, population growth and urbanization also play a crucial role in disease spread, increasing human exposure to vectors and infection risks.

In this context, this work aims to investigate vector-borne disease transmission in the Amazon and analyze how environmental impacts influence the dynamics of malaria transmission, the ecological and socioeconomic factors affecting this spread, and possible prevention and control strategies. The main reference for this research is the Trajetórias Project, developed by the Center for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (SinBiose/CNPq), which is a dataset including environmental, epidemiological, economic, and socioeconomic indicators for all municipalities in the Legal Amazon, analyzing the spatial and temporal relationship between economic trajectories linked to the dynamics of agrarian systems, whether they are family-based rural or large-scale agricultural and livestock production, the availability of natural resources, and the risk of diseases [5].

2. Model formulation

Based on previous work developed to model the transmission of malaria based on precipitation and temperature dynamics [6], we focus on two different sets of compartments: susceptible hosts (S_H), infected hosts (I_H), recovered hosts (R_H), susceptible vectors (S_M), exposed vectors (E_M) and infected vectors (I_M). The equations that describe the transmission are given as:

$$\frac{dS_H}{dt} = -ab_2\left(\frac{I_M}{N}\right)S_H \quad (1)$$

$$\frac{dI_H}{dt} = ab_2\left(\frac{I_M}{N}\right)S_H - \gamma I_H \quad (2)$$

$$\frac{dR_H}{dt} = \gamma I_H \quad (3)$$

$$\frac{dS_M}{dt} = b - ab_1\left(\frac{I_H}{N}\right)S_M - \mu S_M \quad (4)$$

$$\frac{dE_M}{dt} = ab_1\left(\frac{I_H}{N}\right)S_M - \mu E_M - ab_1\left(\frac{I_H}{N}\right)S_M l(\tau_M) \quad (5)$$

$$\frac{dI_M}{dt} = ab_1\left(\frac{I_H}{N}\right)S_M l(\tau_M) - \mu I_M \quad (6)$$

The parameters are given in Table 1, while the variables are given in Table 2, which can be found in the Appendix. The selected human population was from the rural area of Manaus, between the years of 2004 to 2008, as this locality had the highest incidence of malaria caused by *P. vivax* in the Amazon region [5]. This species of *Plasmodium* was chosen as it is responsible for the highest number of malaria cases in Brazil [8, 9]. With the incidence function [5] we have that

$$\text{Inc}(d, m, z, t_1, t_2) = \frac{\text{Cases}(d, m, z, t_1, t_2)}{\text{Pop}(m, z, (t_1 + t_2)/2) \times 5 \text{ years}} \times 10^5, \quad (7)$$

where $\text{Cases}(d, m, z, t_1, t_2)$ is the number of cases of disease d in zone z of municipality m , and t_1 and t_2 are the initial and final years of the interval, while $\text{Pop}(m, z, (t_1 + t_2)/2) \times 5 \text{ years}$ is the population in zone z of municipality m in the middle of the period multiplied by the total number of observation years. In this case, we could indicate as:

$$\text{Inc}(\text{Vivax}, \text{Manaus}, \text{Rural}, 2004, 2008) = \frac{\text{Cases}(\text{Vivax}, \text{Manaus}, \text{Rural}, 2004, 2008)}{\text{Pop}(\text{Manaus}, \text{Rural}, 2006) \times 5 \text{ years}} \times 10^5 \quad (8)$$

$$184030.8 = \frac{78745}{5\text{Pop}} \times 10^5 \Rightarrow \text{Pop} \approx 8558 \quad (9)$$

Using data on the total population of Manaus in this period, with an incidence of 3106.4 and a number of cases of 262264, the total population of the municipality was estimated to be 1688540 inhabitants. According to official census, the resident population was of 1688524 inhabitants [10]. Thus, the rural population could be considered as approximately 0.5% of the municipality's population.

Appendix A. Tables

Table A.1: List of model parameters.

Parameter	Definition	Formulation
$b(R, T)$	Mosquito birth rate (days ⁻¹)	$B_E p_E(R) p_L(R, T) p_P(R) / (\tau_E + \tau_L(T) + \tau_P)$
$a(T)$	Biting rate (days ⁻¹)	$(T - T_1) / D_1$
$\mu(T)$	Mosquito mortality rate per capita (days ⁻¹)	$-\log(p(T))$
$\tau_M(T)$	Duration of sporozoite cycle (days)	$DD / (T - T_{min})$
$\tau_L(T)$	Duration of larval development phase (days)	$1 / c_1 T + c_2$
$p(T)$	Daily mosquito survival rate	$e^{(-1/(AT^2+BT+C))}$
$p_L(R)$	Probability of larval survival dependent on rainfall	$(4p_{ML}/R_L^2)R(R_L - R)$
$p_L(T)$	Probability of larval survival dependent on temperature	$e^{-(c_1 T + c_2)}$
$p_L(R, T)$	Probability of larval survival	$p_L(R) p_L(T)$
$l(\tau_M)(T)$	Probability of mosquito survival during sporozoite cycle (days ⁻¹)	$p(T)^{\tau_M(T)}$
$M(t)$	Total population of mosquitos	$S_M(t) + E_M(t) + I_M(t)$
$N(t)$	Total population of humans	$S_H(t) + I_H(t) + R_H(t)$

Table A.2: List of model variables.

Symbol	Definition	Units
b_1	Proportion of bites from susceptible mosquitoes on infected humans that result in infection	Dimensionless
b_2	Proportion of bites from infected mosquitoes on susceptible humans that result in infection	Dimensionless
γ	1/Average duration of infectiousness in humans	days ⁻¹
T_1	Mean temperature in the absence of seasonality	°C
T_2	Amplitude of seasonal variability in temperature	Dimensionless
R_1	Average monthly precipitation in the absence of seasonality	mm
R_2	Amplitude of seasonal variability in precipitation	Dimensionless
ω_1	Angular frequency of seasonal oscillations in temperature	months ⁻¹
ω_2	Angular frequency of seasonal oscillations in precipitation	months ⁻¹
ϕ_1	Phase lag of temperature variability (phase shift)	Dimensionless
ϕ_2	Phase lag of precipitation variability (phase shift)	Dimensionless
B_E	Number of eggs laid per adult per oviposition	Dimensionless
p_{ME}	Maximum probability of egg survival	Dimensionless
p_{ML}	Maximum probability of larval survival	Dimensionless
p_{MP}	Maximum probability of pupal survival	Dimensionless
τ_E	Duration of the egg development phase	days
b_3	Infection rate in exposed mosquitoes ($1/\tau_M(T)$)	days ⁻¹
τ_P	Duration of the pupal development phase	days
R_L	Rainfall threshold until breeding sites are eliminated, removing immature individuals	mm
T_{min}	Minimum temperature, below which there is no development of the parasite: 14.5	°C
DD	Degree-days for parasite development. “Sum of heat” for maturation: 105 [7]	°C days
A	Empirical sensitivity parameter	(°C ² days) ⁻¹
B	Empirical sensitivity parameter	(°C days) ⁻¹
C	Empirical sensitivity parameter	days ⁻¹
D_1	Empirical sensitivity parameter: 36.5	°C days
c_1	Empirical sensitivity parameter	(°C days) ⁻¹
c_2	Empirical sensitivity parameter	days ⁻¹
T'	Empirical temperature parameter	°C

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