

Abstract

Finfish like other animals are prone to infections that limit their growth, reproduction; cause morbidity and mortality; while some are zoonotic. Fish diseases and conditions recorded in Kenya are based on laboratory diagnosis after disease outbreak on farms, research and capture fisheries. Fish parasites reported include ectoparasitic protozoa, endoparasitic helminthes, and parasitic crustaceans. A few microbial infections have been reported in form of acid-fast bacteria, Gram positive and negative bacteria; surface and systemic fungi. Lymphocystis virus infection is the only one reported so far. Non – infectious disorders in form of mycotoxicosis, nutritional deficiencies, tumours and stunted growth have been reported in various fish. Fish capture from the ocean, lakes and rivers has a limit, but there is high demand for animal protein to feed the ever increasing human population. This demand can partly be filled by increased production in aquaculture in numerous water resources in the country. The Government of Kenya has identified aquaculture development as a core sector for economic stimulus program and allocated fund to it. As a result farmers are involved in semi-intensive and intensive aquaculture systems. This will provide the highly needed quality protein for domestic use and trade; lead to economic growth, poverty reduction, increased income, and improved food security. As subsistence and commercial fish farming increase, there will be challenges in form of availability of fish seeds, feeds; and climate change and water pollution. Some of these will cause stress to fish predisposing them to endemic, emerging and re-emerging diseases; make fish products unsafe for both human and animal consumption; and trans-boundary diseases, a concern to the veterinarian. The diseases will also limit accessibility to lucrative markets. This is an overview of current fish disease status and future trends in changing environment challenges for the veterinarian.