

LEGIONELLOSIS, LEGIONNAIRES - USA (PENNSYLVANIA):ALERT

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A ProMED-mail post <<http://www.promedmail.org>>

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Date: Wed, 10 Aug 2005

From: Robert Muder <[RMuder1@aol.com](mailto:RMuder1@aol.com)>

On Tue, 9 Aug 2005, our lab made the diagnosis of Legionnaires' disease via urinary antigen in a veteran who attended the Pennsylvania American Legion Convention in Valley Forge, PA on 17 Jul 2005. He became ill 10-12 days after the meeting. We have reported the case to the Health Department.

A second case of Legionnaires' disease has been identified among attendees of the American Legion Convention in Valley Forge, PA as well. Both patients are residents of the Pittsburgh area.

It is still too early to say whether this represents an outbreak related to the convention; the appropriate Health Departments are investigating. However, my colleagues in PA [and elsewhere - Mod.LL] should ask their pneumonia patients about attendance at the convention, and order Legionella urinary antigen and culture.

Robert R. Muder MD VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System <[RMuder1@aol.com](mailto:RMuder1@aol.com)>

[ProMED thanks Dr Muder for allowing us to post his observations from the Infectious Diseases Society of America listserv. It is not stated how many attendees may have been from other states, as more cases may be recognized in PA or elsewhere.

L. pneumophila, of course, came initially to the mainstream of infectious diseases related to the 1976 Legionnaires' Convention in Philadelphia, PA. - Mod.LL]

LEGIONELLOSIS, LEGIONNAIRES - USA (PENNSYLVANIA) (02)

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2 in PA Contract Legionnaires' Disease

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2 men tested positive for Legionnaires' disease after they attended the Pennsylvania American Legion's annual convention in Montgomery County, not far from where 34 people died of the disease at a similar event in 1976, hotel officials said Thu, 11 Aug 2005.

The legionnaires, 60 and 70 years old, are from the Pittsburgh area and are back home after brief hospitalizations, said Kit Watson, Adjutant for the Pennsylvania posts of the

American Legion. 3 other legionnaires who felt sick after the convention were tested and results came back negative for the respiratory infection, he said

The cases come more than 3 decades after the bacterium was discovered nearby in Philadelphia, where 34 people died and 221 became ill at an American Legion convention in 1976.

The 2005 convention was held 14-17 Jul 2005 in King of Prussia, a Philadelphia suburb. About 1500 people attended the event at the Radisson Valley Forge, a complex that includes hotel rooms and a convention center, Health Department spokesman Richard McGarvey said.

The only direct link between the 2 men was that they both attended the convention. The hotel could be the source of the illnesses, given the men's onset dates for the illness and the usual 2-10 day incubation period for legionellosis, but investigators have not made any conclusions, McGarvey said.

Montgomery County health officials are taking water samples from the site.

Legionnaires' disease often spreads through inhalation of mist from contaminated water. It can be found in air conditioning cooling towers, hot water tanks, whirlpool spas, humidifiers, faucets, shower heads and moist soil.

"Certainly when you have 2 cases that have someplace in common, you'll want to do environmental testing to see what's there," McGarvey said.

There are typically about 150 cases of Legionnaires' disease reported annually in Pennsylvania, McGarvey said. As many as 90 percent of Legionnaires' cases go unreported, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Those who contract the disease experience flulike symptoms. Untreated, the disease proves fatal in 15 to 20 percent of the cases.

[Byline: Joann Loviglio]

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[This is a formal media report on the outbreak posted on ProMED yesterday. - Mod.LL]