
Date: Fri, 30 May 2003 20:55:09 -0400 (EDT)
From: ProMED-mail <promed@promed.isid.harvard.edu>
Subject: PRO/EDR> Legionellosis, spa outbreak - Spain (Canary Islands)
LEGIONELLOSIS, SPA OUTBREAK - SPAIN (CANARY ISLANDS)

A ProMED-mail post <<http://www.promedmail.org>>
ProMED-mail is a program of the International Society for Infectious Diseases
<<http://www.isid.org>>
Date: Thu, 22 May 2003 13:21:05 -0300
From: Jaime R. Torres, ProMED-ESP <torresj@iname.com>
Source: Diario de Avisos; [edited and translated by Maria Jacobs, ProMED-ESP]
<<http://www.diariodeavisos.com/hoy/noticias/saludmedicina/21DA23A.html>>

Rafael Diaz, health secretary for the government of the Canary Islands, reported on 21 May 2003 that the outbreak of legionellosis detected in the locality of Adeje, in the south of the island of Tenerife, and that has affected at least 4 persons, is "completely under control." 2 patients were released from the hospital; 2 remain in the University Hospital La Candelaria; one is in the intensive care unit (ICU), but his condition is improving.

Health authorities believe that the outbreak originated in a spa that offers water-based treatments. The site is now closed and will not reopen until all possibilities of contagion have been completely eradicated. Sources at the health department said that the 4 cases identified so far are causally and temporally related to the site, and added that, given the incubation period for the disease, it is possible that new cases will appear until 28 May 2003.

According to Diaz, the source of the outbreak is the water refrigeration system.

Technicians from the Department of Epidemiology consider this a "small and limited" outbreak that was detected on 15 May 2003, when the department received notification of one case, added to 2 others reported over the previous weeks.

After confirming the causal nexus among the affected persons, public health technicians carried out an environmental inspection of the spa and, as a preventive measure, cancelled all its activities until further notice.
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[This moderator learned today of a possible new case of legionellosis in a Venezuelan resident that vacationed in Adeje and visited the implicated spa during the time when the other 4 patients were identified. 3 days later the patient presented respiratory symptoms that worsened over a few days and required not only hospitalization but also assisted ventilation. He remains in the ICU in a clinic in Caracas, Venezuela, and his condition remains stable but serious. A reference

laboratory is currently testing the samples to confirm the diagnosis of legionella infection. - Mod.JT]

[This cluster of cases in the Canary Islands, with a probable additional case that was diagnosed in a traveler on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, illustrates once again that we live in a global village. Travelers have presented -- and will present with illnesses acquired thousands of miles distant from the acquisition point. Knowledge about outbreaks of illnesses in far-away places is vital; the current SARS epidemic is a good example. - Mod.LL]

Date: Tue, 3 Jun 2003 10:58:20 -0400 (EDT)
From: ProMED-mail <promed@promed.isid.harvard.edu>
Subject: PRO> Legionellosis, spa outbreak - Spain (Canary Islands) (02)
LEGIONELLOSIS, SPA OUTBREAK - SPAIN (CANARY ISLANDS) (02)

A ProMED-mail post
<<http://www.promedmail.org>>
ProMED-mail is a program of the International Society for Infectious Diseases
<<http://www.isid.org>>
Date: Sat, 31 May 2003 09:30:55 +0200
From: Steve Berger <mberger@post.tau.ac.il>
Source: Gideon [edited] <www.GideonOnline.com>

Background on Legionellosis in the Canary Islands

2 cases were reported in 1998; 1 in 1999; 2 in 2000; 5 (0.31/100 000) in 2001.
62 European travelers acquired legionellosis in the Canary Islands during 1989 to 2001.
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Date: Wed, 11 Jun 2003 21:08:38 -0400 (EDT)
From: <promed-edr@promed.isid.harvard.edu>
Subject: PRO/EDR> Legionellosis - Spain (Valencia)
LEGIONELLOSIS - SPAIN (VALENCIA)

A ProMED-mail post <<http://www.promedmail.org>>
ProMED-mail, a program of the International Society for Infectious Diseases
<<http://www.isid.org>>
Date: Mon, 9 Jun 2003 16:56:17 +0800
From: Denis Green <snoigel@hotmail.com>
Source: ABC.es, 9 Jun 2003; [edited]; [translated by Maria Jacobs, ProMED-ESP]
<<http://abc.es/sociedad/noticia.asp?id=186731&dia=hoy>>

Alarm in Valencia's health department after 2 new outbreaks of Legionella

One person has died and 24 others have become infected as legionellosis has reappeared in the Autonomous Community of Valencia recently. The death of one person and the 10 cases of infection diagnosed since 28 May 2003 have revealed the existence of 2 new outbreaks.

The first was an outbreak in Alcoy (the eighth since 1999) and nearby areas, followed by an outbreak in Castellon that originated in the Oncology Department of the Provincial Hospital [illustrating the well-known propensity for legionellosis to be a hospital-acquired infection - Mod.LL].

The bacteria seem to be prominent in Valencia, and particularly in the industrial zone of Alcoy in the province of Alicante, where almost 300 cases of infection have been registered since the disease was first detected in 1999.

On 29 May 2003, a patient hospitalized in the oncology unit died after becoming infected by the bacteria. Subsequently, another 6 cases were reported, none of them particularly severe. 3 occurred in visitors of hospitalized patients, and a 4th in a woman who apparently was infected in the rehabilitation area adjacent to the oncology ward. It was reportedly not difficult to trace the source of infection to the hot water pipe of the shower in a hospital room of the center, where the first patient (with lung cancer) who contracted the disease died, and to the hot and cold water pipes of a shower in a changing room. The health department gave assurances that measures were being taken in the hospital, including water hyperchlorination, higher water temperatures in faucets and showers, and cleaning and disinfection of the rehabilitation pool. In addition, samples of almost 100 possible foci were obtained.

Nonetheless, Health Secretary Serafin Castellano does not discount the possibility of new cases over the next few days, given that the incubation period for the disease has not been determined. The alert continues in Alcoy, although the 10th case in only 3 weeks was confirmed on 19 May 2003, and no new cases have been reported since. Its control has required extensive deployment of resources in order to close a large number of refrigeration towers and carry out necessary tests.

While in Alcoy the situation seems to be resolving, the bacteria have appeared in the nearby locality of Ibi, which also is home to numerous industries that require large refrigeration systems. On 21 May 2003 a case was detected there; another was detected in Onil, in the same district. What the local government initially regarded as an isolated incident was confirmed a few days later as the first outbreak of legionella in Ibi's history, despite the Mayor's assurances that Ibi has none of the unfavorable geographical conditions of Alcoy.

The disease has already affected 5 persons in Ibi and continues to spread in the area. On 5 Jun 2003, a case was detected in Muro de Alcoy, an urban center that

had outbreaks in June 2000 and November 2002. Another case was reported on 6 Jun 2003 in the locality of Planes.

The possibility of further spread of legionella has alerted other areas, particularly Cocentaina, which has had outbreaks of the disease in previous years. In fact, a resident of this municipality contracted legionella pneumonia in Alcoy.

[Byline: L. Pardo and E.J. Blasco]

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