

LEGIONELLOSIS, FATAL - SWEDEN

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: Tue, 31 Aug 2004

From: ProMED-mail <promed@promedmail.org>

Source: The Local [edited]

<<http://www.thelocal.se/article.php?ID=350&date=20040831>>

2 die in separate Legionnaires' outbreaks

2 elderly men have died following 2 outbreaks of the bacterial infection Legionnaire's disease. On Tue, 31 Aug 2004, it was reported that there are now 9 confirmed cases with 2 more suspected in Lidkoping, with 1 death, while another outbreak in Jul 2004 has come to light in Umea, where 3 people fell ill and an elderly man died.

The outbreak earlier this summer has been linked to an old spraying system at the OBS Supermarket in Umea that is used to keep fruit and vegetables moist. The store was temporarily closed.

Over the past years public health authorities have been researching different potential sources of legionella infection, and claim they have checked some 40 different vegetable spraying units in supermarkets, without ever finding any trace of the bacteria behind the disease. Despite this, the board of the Svensk Dagligvaruhandel, a branch organisation for fresh produce retailers in Sweden, has advised its members to turn off all water spraying units in their stores.

"There isn't an actual reason to do so, but it is the only way to stop all the discussion and concern that has spread amongst our clients," commented Thomas Svaton, head of the industry organisation Svensk Dagligvaruhandel, to the Swedish media.

"There aren't that many units anyway, since many stores don't see the need for this additional moisturising system, but those that are in operation should be closed until we have better guidelines on cleaning and maintenance."

The cause of the Lidkoping outbreak is still not clear, but all supermarket spraying systems are being checked. Attention has also turned to the town's public air-conditioning systems.

"We know from outbreaks abroad that air-conditioning systems are a common infection source," commented Martin Wahl from SMI's West Gotaland division to Dagens Nyheter. "There are many cases in which people have been infected by aerosol from cooling towers on industrial sites, and there are 3 such sites in Lidkoping."

[Byline: Lysanne Sizoo] ProMED-mail <promed@promedmail.org>

[As was seen in the original outbreak, like other causes of pneumonia, legionellosis has a higher morbidity and mortality in the elderly. As an intracellular pathogen, legionella tend to cause more significant disease in individuals with compromised cellular immunity. - Mod.LL]

Date: Thu, 2 Sep 2004 20:00:34 -0400 (EDT)
From: ProMED-mail <promed@promed.isid.harvard.edu>
Subject: PRO/EDR> Legionellosis, fatal - Sweden
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