

LEGIONELLOSIS, HOTEL - USA (TEXAS EX OKLAHOMA)

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[1]

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From: John Herbert <j_a_herbert@yahoo.com>

Source: KOCO Channel 5 Channeloklahoma.com [edited]

<<http://www.channeloklahoma.com/news/2940595/detail.html>>

Officials Say Bacteria Caused Illnesses Among Visiting Parents, Students

A bacterium that is connected to Legionnaires' disease has been confirmed in Oklahoma, and state health officials said Mon, 22 Mar 2004 that a Oklahoma hotel was the likely source.

Eyewitness News 5 learned that the Comfort Suites at Interstate 44 and Meridian was the location where people who were in Oklahoma City for a basketball tournament were staying when they became ill.

The state Health Department and the Oklahoma City-County Health Department said Mon, 22 Mar 2004, that the bacterium (*Legionella pneumophila*) caused several upper respiratory illnesses among people who stayed in the hotel. Officials told Eyewitness News 5's Kevin Peters that 66 people from Texas tested positive for the bacterium. 13 people from Houston developed upper respiratory illnesses, officials said.

The bacterium can lead to Legionnaires' disease -- a severe infection that includes pneumonia. It can also cause a milder illness called Pontiac fever. Officials said 2 Houston residents were in the hospital with Pontiac fever Mon evening, 22 Mar 2004.

John Herbert

<j_a_herbert@yahoo.com>

[2]

Date: Mon, 22 Mar 2004

From: ProMED-mail promed@promedmail.org

Source: Houston Chronicle [edited]

<<http://www.chron.com/cs/CDA/ssistory.mpl/metropolitan/2462482>>

50-plus tested for cause of Legionnaires'

More than 50 home-schooled students and others from Montgomery County (Texas) have been tested for the bacterium that causes Legionnaires' disease after returning from an Oklahoma basketball tournament with symptoms of the illness. The source of the illness apparently was an Oklahoma City hotel where about 70 players, parents, and others stayed last week during the National Christian Homeschool Basketball Championship & Family Conference, health officials there said.

Although an Oklahoma state Health Department spokeswoman said 13 people from The Woodlands and nearby areas had tested positive for Legionella pneumophila bacteria, health officials in Montgomery County confirmed only 1 case and Texas health officials said 2 had been confirmed thus far. However, the test results in most cases had not been completed, and more confirmations are likely, said Dr. Herbert DuPont, chief of internal medicine at St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital in Houston.

The conflicting numbers could not immediately be resolved. However, DuPont said the symptoms reported by most patients at the St. Luke's facility in The Woodlands appeared to fit those of Pontiac fever -- a relatively mild, flulike illness of short duration caused by the same bacteria that cause Legionnaires' disease. Both illnesses are treatable with antibiotics and neither is contagious, DuPont said. While the symptoms persist, those who were exposed should see their doctors, but children may go to school and adults to work if they feel able, he said.

Pontiac fever, named for an outbreak in Pontiac, Mich., usually passes after a few days and does not involve pneumonia, DuPont said. By contrast, he said, patients with Legionnaires' disease do get pneumonia and have symptoms much more extreme than those of flu. Legionnaires' disease, named for a 1976 outbreak at an American Legion convention at the Bellevue Stratford Hotel in Philadelphia, is deadly for about 1 in 10 who contract it. But most who succumb have other weakening conditions such as cancer, heart or lung illness, or extreme diabetes, DuPont said. The bacteria are spread through such means as heated water and moisture in air conditioning ducts, he said.

About 70 players and others who stayed at the Comfort Suites on Interstate 40 in Oklahoma City were exposed, and the city-county health department shut down the pool and spa where the outbreak is thought to have started, said department spokesman H.R. Holman. The department is trying to reach everyone who stayed in the hotel recently, Holman said. A desk clerk declined to comment, except to say the hotel remains open.

Leslea Bennett Webb, spokeswoman for the Oklahoma Department of Health, said the patients' symptoms included fever of 102 to 104 degrees F, headache, and muscle aches. Most of the cases were reported Sat, 20 Mar 2004, she said, but the patients, ranging in age from 4 to 44, said they had felt ill since Thu, 18 Mar 2004. Doug McBride, spokesman for the Texas Department of Health, said 2 Texas patients, both from the Houston area, are reported to have tested positive for the bacteria. He would not identify them or the hospital where they were tested. Neither McBride nor Webb could explain the difference between the Texas and Oklahoma numbers.

Jennifer Reynolds-Sanchez of the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, which provides public health services for Montgomery County under contract, gave figures different from either. At Memorial Hermann The Woodlands Hospital, 31 people were tested, but the results were not available Monday, Reynolds-Sanchez said. 2 of those complaining of symptoms were admitted, said Memorial Hermann spokeswoman Jamie O'Roark. At St. Luke's Community Hospital-The Woodlands, 20 were tested, one

was confirmed to have the bacteria, and results were still pending for the others, Reynolds-Sanchez said.
[Byline: Rad Sallee]