

LEGIONELLOSIS - UK (WEST MIDLANDS)

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

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[1]

Date: Sat, 08 Nov 2003 07:38:45 +0000

From: Dr Keith C Marshall <kcm@cix.co.uk>

Source: BBC News [edited] <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/em/fr/-/1/hi/england/3252403.stm>>

Health officials investigate an outbreak of legionnaires' disease which has killed 2 people.

Health officials have confirmed 2 more cases of legionnaires' disease in an outbreak in Hereford which has killed 2 people and left 2 more in a critical condition in the hospital.

A man and woman in their 70s have died and 4 middle aged people are being treated in Hereford County Hospital for the disease. 2 of the hospital patients are in a critical condition in the intensive care unit, the Health Promotion Agency said on Sat, 8 Nov 2003. All victims have links to Hereford city center, where investigations are focused.

Public health officials are investigating the cause of the outbreak. Environmental health officers visited shops and businesses to take water samples from air conditioning systems to check for the bacteria which causes the disease.

Professor Rod Griffiths, director of public health for the West Midlands region, said anyone who was exhibiting symptoms of the disease should contact their general practitioner (GP). He said doctors across the region had been alerted to the outbreak and were on the lookout for further cases. Prof Griffiths said: "If there are people who have had a strange kind of chest infection, with more of a temperature and less of a cough than usual, they should tell their GP."

Griffiths said microbiologists were conducting detailed tests on samples of bacteria taken from the 4 confirmed cases to determine whether the patients had contracted the disease from the same source. He explained: "These specialist tests look at the genetics of the bug and the results are expected early next week. "Then we will know whether they have all caught the same species of the bug."

Dr Mike Deakin, Herefordshire's director of public health, added that further cases of the disease linked to the outbreak could not be ruled out. The incubation period is normally between 2 and 10 days but can be up to 3 weeks. Dr Deakin said that on average the county would expect to see an average of 1 case every 2 years. "That is why we are particularly concerned by this," he said.

[2]

Date: Sun 09 Nov 2003 15:41:04 +0000

From: Dr Keith C Marshall <kcm@cix.co.uk>

Source: BBC Online News [edited] <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/em/fr/-/1/hi/england/3254539.stm>>

Sixth suspected legionnaires' case

A suspected case of legionnaires' disease connected to the outbreak in Hereford has emerged in Wales. Health officials believe a 72 year old man may have contracted the disease during 2 visits to Hereford -- where 2 people have already died from the illness. He is being treated in a Welsh hospital but the location has not been identified.

A further 3 victims are also being treated in Hereford County Hospital for the disease -- 2 in intensive care. Professor Rod Griffiths, director of public health for the West Midlands, said, "A male pensioner is being treated as a suspected case of legionnaires' disease in Wales. We have spoken to the man's wife and ascertained that he had visited Hereford twice within the relevant time window."

Dr Mike Deakin, Hereford's director of public health, said health officials were trying to trace the man's movements and hoping that because he was only briefly in the city it might help to pinpoint the search for the outbreak's source. He said: "This could prove a very useful lead in the search for the source." Meanwhile environmental health officials are checking air conditioning systems. The search is likely to continue for the next few days, but the Health Protection Agency (HPA) said it was possible it would never be found.

GPs across the region have been alerted to the symptoms of the disease, which include a flu-like illness with muscle aches, tiredness, headache, dry cough, and fever. Samples have been taken from the confirmed cases to see whether patients have caught the disease from the same source. Results are expected early next week.

Legionella pneumophila, which causes the disease, is widely distributed in the environment and found in hot and cold water, and air conditioning systems in very small numbers. A hotline has been set up by NHS Direct to deal with concerned members of the public on 01785 231011.

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[The source of this cluster of legionellosis is not clear at this point. - Mod. LL]

LEGIONELLOSIS - UK (WEST MIDLANDS) (02)

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[1]

Date: 14 Nov 2003

From: ProMED-mail <promed@promedmail.org> Source: Eurosurveillance Weekly
Volume 7 Issue 46 13 Nov 2003 [edited]

<<http://www.eurosurveillance.org/ew/2003/031113.asp>>

Outbreak of legionnaires' disease in the west of England

There are 12 confirmed cases legionnaires' disease in 8 men and 4 women aged from 36 to 76 years (median age 55 years), associated with an outbreak in Hereford, in the west of England, close to the Welsh border (1). Dates of onset of illness range from 8 Oct to 9 Nov 2003. One 76-year-old man has died. Cooling towers and other aerosol generating equipment are being sampled and treated. An outbreak investigation is underway.

Any cases of legionnaires' disease with onset since 1 Oct 2003, in patients who visited Hereford in the 14 days before onset, should be reported to David Kirrage, at +44 (0)1432 344344, and to the Health Protection Agency Communicable Disease Surveillance Center.

1. Health Protection Agency. Outbreak of legionnaires' disease in Hereford. Commun Dis Rep CDR Wkly 2003; 13 (46): news.

<<http://www.hpa.org.uk/cdr/PDFfiles/2003/cdr4603.pdf>>

[Reported by: David Hunt, Health Protection Agency West Midlands, and David Kirrage, Hereford and Worcestershire Health Protection Unit, Health Protection Agency, England]

[2]

Date: Fri, 14 Nov 2003

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

Source: BBC news [edited]

<<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/hereford/worcs/3268579.stm>>

3 new cases of Legionnaires' disease

3 new cases of Legionnaires' disease have been confirmed during an outbreak in Hereford, bringing the total number of infected patients to 15. Health officials said the increase in cases on Fri, 14 Nov 2003 was "consistent with the incubation period of this infection".

They said the heightened state of awareness among local GPs and hospital staff was helping to diagnose and treat cases quickly. The latest cases are a woman aged in her 90s, a man in his 60s and a man in his 70s.

Vigorous efforts to identify the source of the outbreak continue across the Hereford region with investigations centered on a cooling tower at a Bulmers' cider plant in the city. Initial tests raised the suspicions of health officials hunting for the source of the outbreak.

Bulmers said there was no direct evidence linking the outbreak to the company and added there was no risk to the public from drinking its products.

Herefordshire Council said more tests were being carried out to try to find out whether the Legionella bug was present at Bulmers. But it said that, even if Legionella was confirmed, it did not necessarily link Bulmers to the current outbreak.

Dr Mike Deakin, county public health director said: "The possible identification of a potential source does not change our approach. Investigations will continue and our advice to people in Herefordshire does not change. We would remind everyone that Legionnaires' disease cannot be passed from person to person and it is safe to visit Hereford."

Bulmers said it was co-operating fully with the task force investigating the outbreak in Hereford.

The firm said an evaporation unit had been closed as a result of the samples taken from the cooling tower. It said this was only a precautionary measure.
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[Indeed, even if Legionella pneumophila bacilli are isolated from an evaporation unit or other aqueous reservoir, the finding does not establish cause and effect unless the typing of the strain is identical to the culture strain. - Mod.LL]

LEGIONELLOSIS - UK (WEST MIDLANDS) (03)

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Date: Sun, 23 Nov 2003

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

Source: IC Network [edited]

<<http://icwales.icnetwork.co.uk/0100news/0600uk/page.cfm?objectid=13654684&method=full&siteid=50082>>

Legionnaires' cases hit 26

2 more people have been diagnosed with Legionnaires' disease after an outbreak of the bug centered on a cider-making plant, health officials have announced.

The Herefordshire Primary Care Trust said the latest victims, a man in his 40s and another in his 50s, were both in stable condition. The new cases bring the total number of people affected during the outbreak -- which has claimed the life of a man in his 70s -- to 26.

Health experts confirmed that samples taken from patients matched legionella found during tests on a cooling tower at the HP Bulmer site at Plough Lane, Hereford.

Dr Mike Deakin, Herefordshire's Director of Public Health, said: "We have been expecting to see new cases, as the incubation period is up to 14 days. One of these cases was detected by a GP, the other following admission to hospital. The fact they have been detected reassures us the heightened state of awareness among local GPs and hospital staff is continuing."

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