

LEGIONELLOSIS, FATAL, HOTEL - UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: (DUBAI)

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

ProMED-mail is a program of the International Society for Infectious Diseases <<http://www.isid.org>>

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<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/7863810.stm>

A 5-star hotel in Dubai is testing for Legionnaires' disease after 3 guests contracted the illness. One of the guests of the Westin Dubai Mina Seyahi, a British cricket scorer and broadcaster, died on Thursday [29 Jan 2009] after leaving Dubai. A spokeswoman for the hotel said all tests for the bacterium that causes the disease had been negative so far but that checks were still being made.

The owner of the Westin hotel chain, Starwood Hotels and Resorts, said it was working with the Dubai authorities to find out how [the man] and the other 2, unidentified, guests became infected. The 69-year-old was a guest of the hotel in mid-January [2009], returning to the UK on 20 [Jan 2009] from a tour to Dubai with his charity cricket team, the Lord's Taverners. The team said no other members were showing symptoms of Legionnaires' disease.

Tests by European and American experts on the Westin Dubai have so far not found the bacterium, Legionella, that causes the disease, said Starwood spokeswoman Amalie Craig. The disease has never been detected at the hotel, according to its own regular checks, she said.

The Westin Dubai's staff has begun contacting guests to inform them of the 3 cases, Ms. Craig said.

People become infected by inhaling water droplets containing the bacterium, says the European Working Group for Legionella Infections

(EWGLI) -- a group of scientists working on the disease. Since the disease was first identified in 1976 -- at a meeting of retired US military personnel, or legionnaires -- outbreaks have been linked to hotels, cruise ships, and other types of holiday accommodation. The Legionella bacterium only poses a risk if it gets into water distribution systems such as air conditioners or plumbing, says the EWGLI.

About 5-15 percent of cases prove fatal, with elderly people most at risk.

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[ProMED-mail Rapporteur Susan Baekeland sent another, similar news release (<<http://7starsdubai.wordpress.com/2009/02/02/dubai-hotel-tests-for-legionnaires-after-guest-dies/>>)].

Legionnaires' disease is the acute pneumonic form of disease caused by Legionella bacteria, usually Legionella pneumophila. About 80-90 percent of cases are caused by L. pneumophila serogroup 1.

Legionnaires' disease is usually acquired by inhalation by a susceptible person of an infectious dose of aerosolized Legionella.

Risk factors in adults include age over 50 years, cigarette smoking, diabetes, chronic heart or lung disease, and immunosuppression.

Legionella are usually found primarily in the hot water portion of plumbing systems and in cooling towers. Warm water temperatures of 25-40 deg C (77-104 deg F) support the highest concentrations of the organism in plumbing systems. In addition, Legionella are embedded in a biofilm that lines the inner walls of the plumbing system's pipes and containers. Concentrations of the organism in the water can be increased by any disruption of this biofilm. Infectious aerosols can be generated by a building's faulty air conditioning systems, shower heads, misters, and whirlpool spas.

Elimination or reduction of legionella colonization in a hot water system is difficult. For a discussion, please see <<http://www.dhmh.state.md.us/html/legionella.htm>>.

An epidemiological and environmental investigation for the source of Legionella organisms should be initiated when the 1st case of legionellosis is identified. Genotyping patient and environmental isolates will help to confirm the environmental source.

Dubai is one of the 7 emirates and the most populous city of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) (<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dubai>>).

Dubai has been ruled by the Al Maktoum dynasty since 1833. Dubai's current ruler, Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, is also the prime minister and vice president of the UAE (<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dubai>>).

Dubai can be located on the HealthMap/ProMED-mail interactive map at <<http://healthmap.org/promed?v=23.9,54.3,5>>. - Mod.ML]