

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES for general practitioners and practice nurses

This edition is smaller than the normal Public Health Information Quarterly because of the extensive preparations required during May for Exercise Cruickshank, a pandemic exercise involving numerous government agencies and other organisations who would be involved in a pandemic response.

Exercise Cruickshank

Exercise Cruickshank will run over 4 days in May, the 10th, 16th, 17th and 23rd. Border agencies and public health staff will participate in an exercise at Christchurch international airport in the morning of the 10th that will involve screening and processing of 'international arrivals' for quarantine purposes and transporting them to a local 'quarantine' hotel.

On the 16th, the public health response to contain isolated clusters of 'cases' by vigorous contact tracing in the community will be tested. This will be followed on the 17th by the community-wide response to managing a pandemic during which time primary care community based assessment centres (CBACs) will be exercised. This will involve the setting up of CBACs both in major centres and some rural towns. The welfare response will also be tested on the 17th.

On the 23rd there will be an agencies forum to discuss how the community could recover from a pandemic.

Avian Influenza Update

By the 11th of April there had been 291 human cases globally of Avian influenza (Fig.1) resulting in 172 deaths (mortality rate of 59%). Although Egypt has had the most cases (16) this year their mortality rate has only been 25%. This contrasts with Indonesia's mortality rate of 83% (5 deaths from 6 cases).

Other recent news:

- The WHO have conducted a pandemic exercise in Cambodia.
- An H5N1 vaccine for human use has been approved by the FDA in the US.

April 2007

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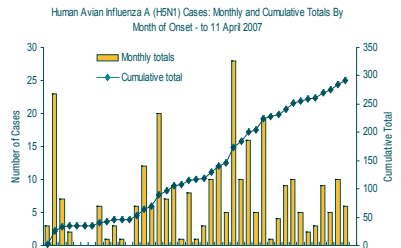
Public Health

Canterbury

District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora o Waitaha

Figure 1



Norovirus Outbreak

Norovirus is a frequent cause of gastroenteritis outbreaks in institutions and settings where food is served. The outbreak at the Easter trans-Tasman Badminton tournament in Christchurch was an example of this. Seventy-nine of the 270 players and officials who attended a dinner were affected and the tournament was consequently suspended for 24 hours. Food was probably contaminated during preparation by a food handler who was in the early symptomatic phase of the illness. Norovirus was isolated from several faecal specimens.

Norovirus has an incubation period of 10-50 hours and causes diarrhoea, nausea and vomiting and occasionally a low grade fever. Symptoms typically last 24-60 hours. It has a high attack rate with as few as 10 virus particles being sufficient to cause illness. It is spread by faecal-oral contamination of food and water, person to person spread, and environmental and fomite contamination.

Those affected may continue to shed the virus for up to 2 weeks although it is unclear to what extent viral shedding over 72 hours after recovery signifies continued infectivity. Secondary transmission frequently occurs amongst household contacts.

VTEC Case and Contact

In late March a young child in Christchurch was diagnosed as having VTEC (verotoxin producing E.coli). Another household member who was positive on faecal culture had cooked for others on a school camp, but fortunately there were no further cases.

VTEC infection is due to ingestion of faecally contaminated food or water or by direct ingestion of the organism. Cattle are the major source. Most people recover within 5-10 days. Antibiotics are contraindicated as they may precipitate the haemolytic uraemic syndrome.

Summary Of Selected Notifiable Diseases January – March 2007 & 2006

	Canterbury		South Canterbury		West Coast		TOTAL
	Cases Jan-Mar 2007	Cases Jan-Mar 2006	Cases Jan-Mar 2007	Cases Jan-Mar 2006	Cases Jan-Mar 2007	Cases Jan-Mar 2006	Cases Jan-Mar 2007
ENTERIC DISEASES							
Campylobacteriosis	812	601	143	134	33	24	988
Cryptosporidiosis	11	11	2	8	2	5	15
Gastroenteritis	43	46	0	1	1	2	44
Giardiasis	38	22	5	5	2	2	45
Hepatitis A	-	27	-	2	-	-	-
Listeriosis	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Paratyphoid	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Salmonellosis	37	57	9	18	3	4	49
Shigellosis	2	2	-	-	-	-	2
Typhoid	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
VTEC	8	3	-	3	1	-	9
Yersiniosis	27	16	3	5	8	2	38
OTHER DISEASES							
AIDS	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
Dengue Fever	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Haemophilus influenzae b	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hepatitis B	2	6	1	1	-	-	6
Hepatitis C	2	4	-	1	-	-	2
Lead absorption	4	4	-	1	-	-	4
Legionellosis	3	-	-	-	-	-	3
Leptospirosis	4	1	2	2	1	1	7
Malaria	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Measles	1	2	-	-	-	1	1
Meningococcal infection	2	5	-	-	-	-	2
Mumps	1	2	-	1	-	-	1
Pertussis	23	103	4	15	-	7	27
Rubella	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Tuberculosis (new case)	12	6	-	-	-	-	12