

May 29 2019

2019 Canterbury Measles Outbreak – A summary of cases

Between 16 February and 30 March 2019 thirty-eight people in Canterbury tested positive for measles. In addition, there was one additional case of measles in Canterbury imported from overseas which is not considered part of the outbreak.

The Genotype

The genotype tested in nine of the early cases was B3.

There were two cases with serotype linked to travel overseas.

Only wild strain cases were included in the outbreak

All 38 confirmed cases of measles in the Canterbury outbreak had a wild strain of measles. The additional, overseas contracted case, also had the wild strain.

Of the more than 236 notified cases investigated, 13 were identified as the vaccine strain. These cases presented with mild symptoms a short time after receiving a vaccination, and as such, have not been included in the outbreak.

Vaccine status of confirmed measles cases

- 19 cases were not vaccinated at all and ranged in age from 4 months to 54 years.
- 11 cases had a single vaccination. Six were aged 29-50 years, 3 were aged 5-28 years and 2 were aged under 4 years.
- 4 cases had two vaccinations and were aged between 10-28 years.
- 4 cases had unknown vaccination status and were aged between 36-45 years.

The person who contracted measles overseas, and who is not considered part of the Canterbury outbreak, had a single MMR vaccination.

If vaccinated which vaccine was used

Morbillivirus live vaccine was introduced (as a single dose) in New Zealand in 1969 for children aged initially between 10 months and five years, and then 12-15 months. In 1990 the morbillivirus component was added to mumps and rubella to form the combined MMR vaccine given at 12-15 months.

In 1992 a second dose was added to the schedule which was given at 11 years. In 2001 the second dose was brought forward to 4 years (with a commensurate catch-up programme for those between 4 years and 11).