

Overseas briefs

Source: World Health Organization (WHO)
This material has been condensed from information on the WHO Internet site. A link to this site can be found under 'Other Australian and international communicable diseases sites' on the CDI homepage.

Dysentery

Sierra Leone

Reports from 6 December 1999 to 16 January 2000 provided by the Ministry of Health gave a total of 3,094 cases of shigellosis with 132 deaths (CFR 4.27). The WHO mission, working in collaboration with other agencies has reported that the outbreak has spread to many areas of the country. Further investigation and management strategies are being implemented.

Lesotho

On 12 January 2000, the Minister of Health announced an outbreak of diarrhoea in Mohale's Hoek district in the southern area of the country. The number of cases has risen beyond the expected seasonal figures from November 1999 to January 2000. As of 15 January 2000 a total of 1,862 cases with 28 deaths had been reported and adults were more affected than children. Problems identified were lack of protection of latrines and inadequate water supplies and unprotected water. Control measures were initiated and currently the number of cases appears to be decreasing. The Ministry of Health has sufficient medical supplies to deal with this outbreak.

Yellow fever in Brazil

Since the beginning of the year, 61 suspected cases of yellow fever have been reported. Five have been laboratory confirmed, 8 discarded and for 48 the lab results are pending. Active surveillance is in place throughout the country. All 5 confirmed cases (2 fatal) represent sylvatic transmission of yellow fever virus. Immunisation programs and vector control measures are being carried out. Adequate supplies of yellow fever vaccine are available in Brazil.

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Contributions

Contributions covering any aspects of communicable diseases are invited. All contributions are subject to the normal refereeing process. **Instructions to authors can be found in *CDI* 2000;24:5.**

Imported case of Lassa fever in Germany - Update

The 23 year old student who contracted Lassa fever while in Africa in November died on 15 January 2000 in Germany. No secondary cases have been reported.

Polio in China

The WHO Polio Eradication Programme has reported a case of polio which was first reported in Qinghai Province, on 13 October 1999. The 16 month old case had onset of paralysis on 12 October 1999, after a day of fever on 11 October. Two stool samples yielded poliovirus isolates, which were later typed and differentiated as P1 wild viruses. At the time that the second sample was taken five contacts were sampled, one of which, a four year old cousin of the infected child, was also positive for wild poliovirus. The case child was unregistered and had received zero doses of polio vaccine. Neither the case nor the direct family had contact with people outside the county in the two months prior to onset. No evidence of wide-scale circulation of wild poliovirus has yet been found. Initial sequencing information on the wild poliovirus shows a close similarity to viruses recently circulating in India. The virus is significantly different from those that have been circulating in China up to the last case in 1994. Initial case response immunisation has been carried out and extensive additional activities are planned.

Cholera in Madagascar

By the end of November 1999, 6,983 cases of cholera, with 433 deaths were recorded with the majority occurring in Mahajanga Province. In January 2000, cholera was reported from a fourth province, Toliary, where the first case was confirmed on 11 January. The rainy season started in early December, and 3,176 cases with 121 deaths have been recorded in Madagascar since then up to 10 January. The Ministry of Health is continuing to take appropriate control measures.

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