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NEWS



ENTERIC



RESPIRATORY



IMMUNISATION



HIV/STIs



BACTERAEamia



ZOOSES



DIARY



BACK ISSUES

# CDR WEEKLY

## Main stories this week:

[New national syphilis awareness campaign for homosexual men](#)

[Typhoid in Newport, Wales – update](#)

## Updated this week:

[Respiratory tract infections, England and Wales: laboratory reports, weeks 31-35/01](#)

[Diary dates](#)

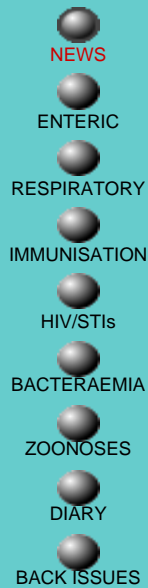
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## Contents

[New national syphilis awareness campaign for homosexual men](#)

[Typhoid in Newport, Wales – update](#)

## New national syphilis awareness campaign for homosexual men

A new integrated mass media campaign aimed at gay men was launched this week to promote awareness of the signs and symptoms of syphilis, and to encourage those who may have been at risk to seek screening. The campaign is funded by the Department of Health, and implemented by the Terrence Higgins Trust (THT) with expert input from the PHLS. It is being launched in response to the recently reported outbreaks and increasing incidence of syphilis among homosexual men in England. Since 1996, diagnoses of primary and secondary syphilis in genitourinary medicine clinics have more than doubled in males and females. The rise was especially marked between 1999 and 2000, when infections rose by over 60% (153 to 248) in males and 30% (55 to 73) in females, and diagnoses attributed to sex between men rose from by 117% (52 to 113) (1). Since 1997, when an outbreak in Bristol heralded the resurgence of syphilis, subsequent outbreaks have been reported in the North West, South East, and London regions (2-6). Nearly all were characterised by rapid increases among homosexual men, particularly those who are HIV positive, who report high numbers of casual sexual partners (7). This includes men known to be HIV infected and there is a risk of concomitant increase in HIV transmission (8).

The new campaign will utilise a variety of interventions including a briefing paper for use by health workers and volunteers in contact with homosexual men. From the weekend of the 8 to 9 September, adverts giving basic information about syphilis will appear in a variety of weekly and monthly gay publications. These adverts will run for three months, during which time a more detailed leaflet will be distributed by outreach workers and inserted into a national gay magazine. Poster versions of the adverts are also being produced. Further information on the campaign, including press adverts and leaflets are available of the THT website at [www.tht.org.uk](http://www.tht.org.uk) .

1. CDSC. Diagnoses of gonorrhoea reach ten-year high. *Commun Dis Rep CDR Wkly* [serial online] 2001 [cited 26 July 2001]; **11** (15): news. Available at [www.phls.co.uk/publications/CDR%20Weekly/archive/news3001.html#gonorrhoea](http://www.phls.co.uk/publications/CDR%20Weekly/archive/news3001.html#gonorrhoea)
2. CDSC. Syphilis in Bristol 1997-8: an update. *Commun Dis Rep CDR Wkly* 1998; **8** (47): 413, 416.
3. CDSC. Increased transmission of syphilis in Manchester. *Commun Dis Rep CDR Wkly* 2000; **10** (10): 89.
4. Higgins SP, Sukthankar A, Mahto M, Jarvis RR, Lacey HB. Syphilis increases in Manchester, UK. *Lancet* 2000; **355**: 1466.
5. CDSC. Increased transmission of syphilis in men who have sex with men reported from Brighton and Hove. *Commun Dis Rep CDR Wkly* 2000; **10** (20): 177,180.
6. CDSC: Increased transmission of syphilis in Brighton and Greater Manchester among men who have sex with men. *Commun Dis Rep CDR Wkly* 2000; **10** (43): 383,386.
7. Clark P, Cook PA, Syed Q, Ashton JR, Bellis MA. *Re-emerging syphilis in the North West. Lessons from the Manchester outbreak.* Liverpool: Liverpool John Moore's University, January 2001.
8. Fleming DT, Wasserheit JN. From epidemiological synergy to public health policy and practice: the contribution of other sexually transmitted diseases to sexual transmission of HIV infection. *Sex Transm Inf* 1999; **75**: 3-17.

## Typhoid in Newport, Wales – update

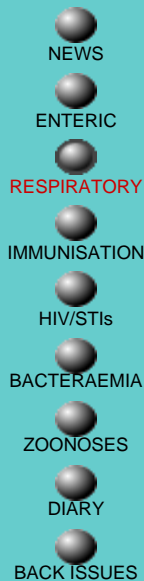
A fifth case of typhoid fever in the Newport area was confirmed in the past week. The case, a young adult, was initially admitted to hospital in late July with fever and gastrointestinal symptom, but had a negative blood culture, possibly because of prior antibiotic treatment. The case was readmitted to hospital after a two-week holiday abroad and diagnosed by isolation of *Salmonella typhi* from a blood culture. The patient is making a good recovery.

All five cases became ill in late July 2001 and are associated with the Pillgwenlly district of Newport (1,2). All cases give a history of eating food from the same premises during the incubation period. Appropriate control measures have been taken. No other common links have been found between all the cases.

1. PHLS. Typhoid fever in Newport, Wales. *Commun Dis Rep CDR Wkly* [serial online] 2001 [cited 6 September 2001]; **11** (32): news. Available at [www.phls.co.uk/publications/CDR%20Weekly/archive/news3201.html#typhoid](http://www.phls.co.uk/publications/CDR%20Weekly/archive/news3201.html#typhoid)
2. PHLS. Typhoid fever in Newport, Wales: update. *Commun Dis Rep CDR Wkly* [serial online] 2001 [cited 6 September 2001]; **11** (33): news [www.phls.co.uk/publications/CDR%20Weekly/archive/news3301.html#typhoid](http://www.phls.co.uk/publications/CDR%20Weekly/archive/news3301.html#typhoid)

[Back to top](#)





## Contents

[Respiratory tract infections, England and Wales: laboratory reports, weeks 31-35/01](#)

[Opportunist mycobacterial infections, England and Wales: laboratory reports, weeks 14-26/01](#)

## Respiratory tract infections, England and Wales: laboratory reports, weeks 31-35/01

	Number of reports received					Total reports
	31/01	32/01	33/01	34/01	35/01	31-35/01
Adenovirus (excluding EM faeces)	26	16	12	23	35	112
Coronavirus	–	–	–	–	–	–
Influenza A	17	–	–	2	–	19
Influenza B	14	1	2	1	1	19
Parainfluenza	246	11	1	11	14	61
RS virus	32	5	2	8	1	48
Rhinovirus	1	–	–	3	1	5
<i>Chlamydia sp</i>	8	–	3	2	4	17
<i>Coxiella burnetti</i>	2	–	–	1	2	5
<i>Legionella sp</i>	4	4	10	1	2	21
<i>Mycoplasma pneumoniae</i>	9	11	9	10	2	41

**Adenovirus** (excluding types 40, 41, group F, EM faeces): 71 patients had eye infections. F 19y had meningitis.

**Coronavirus:** No cases reported.

**Influenza A:** 19 cases were reported. North West region reported 11 cases, Eastern seven, and South East one. Thirty-seven per cent of cases were aged 65 years or over.

**Influenza B:** 19 cases were reported. North West region reported nine cases, Eastern eight, and Trent two. Seventy-nine per cent of cases were aged between 15 and 44 years.

**Parainfluenza** (type 1, one; type 2, three; type 3, 5; type 4, 0; untyped two). 61 cases were reported. One patient had bronchiolitis. North West region reported 19 cases, Trent 12, South West ten, South East and Wales five each, Eastern and West Midlands four each, and London and Northern and Yorkshire one each. Sixty-nine per cent of cases were aged less than one year.

**Respiratory syncytial virus:** 48 cases were reported. 12 patients had bronchiolitis. Eastern region reported 29 cases, North West eight, South West six, South East and West Midlands two each, and Trent one. Fifty-eight per cent of cases were aged less than one year.

**Rhinovirus:** five cases were reported. Trent region reported three cases, and North West and South East one each. Sixty per cent of cases were aged less than one year.

**Respiratory chlamydia** (*C.psittaci*, 11; *C.pneumoniae*, 2; *Chlamydia spp*, 4): 4 patients had pneumonia. M 33y had bird contact.

**Coxiella burnetti:** 5 cases were reported. M 39y had acute hepatitis. Trent (2 cases), Eastern (2 cases), South West (1 case).

**Legionella:** 19 cases were reported with pneumonia, 16 were males aged from 33 to 81 years and three were females aged from 49 to 58 years. Two cases, M 35y and M 36y, had non-pneumonic infection. Two males aged 54 and 78 years died. Ten cases were associated with travel abroad: Spain 5, Turkey 2, and Mexico, United States, and Italy one each. Ten males aged between 33 and 79 years had community acquired infections. One male aged 78 years died and one male aged 36 years had non-pneumonic infection and is the fourth case associated with an outbreak in Rotherham.

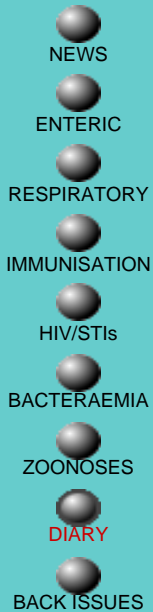
**Mycoplasma pneumoniae:** 41 cases were reported. Eleven patients had pneumonia. F 18y had glandular fever. Eastern and South West regions each reported 10 cases, North West nine, and South East and West Midlands six each. Forty-six per cent of cases were aged from 15 to 44 years.

## Opportunist mycobacterial infections, England and Wales: laboratory reports, weeks 14-26/01

	Number of reports received weeks 14-26/01				Cumulative totals 01-26*	
	Male	Female	Not stated	Total	2001	2000
<b>Avium-intracellulare group</b>	34	19	1	54	124	183
Site of isolate**						
pulmonary	26	13	1	40	92	125
lymph node	–	–	–	–	4	3
blood	2	2	–	4	10	14
other	7	4	–	11	21	43
<b>M. malmoense</b>	20	11	1	32	66	81
Site of isolate						
pulmonary	16	8	–	24	47	65
lymph node	–	–	–	–	1	–
other	4	3	1	8	18	16
<b>M. kansasii</b>	7	7	–	14	51	64
<b>M. xenopi</b>	5	1	–	6	18	18
Other species#	7	3	1	11	24	16

\* provisional data; \*\* number of isolates may exceed number of cases, as cases may have disease at more than one site; # *M. marinum* 4; *M. fortuitum* 3; *M. chelonae* 2; *M. goodii* 2.

[Back to top](#)



## PHLS annual scientific conference, 2001

The 2001 PHLS Annual Scientific Conference will be held at the University of Warwick, from Monday 17 to Wednesday 19 September. The conference will comprise the proven successful mix of plenaries, parallel sessions, workshops, poster exhibitions and trade show.

Delegates from outside the PHLS are welcome, and all professionals concerned with infectious diseases will find plenty of interest. For more details, including programme, abstracts and booking information, see the web site at <[www.phlsnorth.co.uk/asc2001/](http://www.phlsnorth.co.uk/asc2001/)> or telephone Janice Glocker or Sonia Vithlani on 020 8200 1295.

## *Infection 2001*

This year's *Infection 2001* meeting takes place on 16 October 2001 at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham. Topics will include MALDI-TOF mass spectroscopy, a national strategy for controlling antibiotic resistance, lessons from the Leicestershire TB outbreak, infectious intestinal disease, the Food Standards Agency, and the science and practice of controlling foot and mouth disease. There is a registration fee of £25. For further information contact Dorothy Palmer, Aventis House, 50 Kings Hill Avenue, King's Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4AH (email: [dorothy.palmer@aventis.com](mailto:dorothy.palmer@aventis.com)).

## Food, water, and environmental microbiology

The annual food, water, and environmental microbiology meeting will take place at PHLS Colindale on 17 October 2001. Topics will include the burden of foodborne infection in England and Wales, food and waterborne protozoan parasites, water virology and the changing seasons, BSE, spread and persistence of *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* in the domestic kitchen, and the use of molecular techniques for monitoring enteric virus contamination of shellfish harvesting areas. The fee is £35 (£10 for members of the Association of Clinical Microbiologists). For further information and registration contact Dr S Skidmore, PHLS Midlands, PRH, Telford TF6 6TF (tel: 01952 641222 ext 4353; email [sskidmore@mids.phls.nhs.uk](mailto:sskidmore@mids.phls.nhs.uk)).