Health Protection Report
weekly report

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*** These tables (initially omitted) were inserted on 17 March 2010.**

News

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- **Anthrax alert for heroin users – an update**
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Anthrax alert for heroin users – an update

Cases of anthrax in heroin users have continued to occur since the first case was reported in Glasgow in December 2009. To date there have been 29 cases of anthrax in heroin users in the UK, eleven of which were fatal. Twenty-six cases have been reported in Scotland (from seven Health Boards) and three in England (two in London and one in Blackpool). No cases have yet been reported from Wales or Northern Ireland.

The Health Protection Agency continues to work closely with NHS colleagues, public health organisations in the devolved administrations, and the police as part of the nationwide investigation.

As cases continue to be diagnosed it is clear that contaminated heroin is still in circulation, and clinicians and microbiologists are encouraged to remain alert to the possibility of anthrax in drug users with appropriate signs and symptoms.

Guidance has been developed with Health Protection Scotland for many aspects of the investigation and management of cases. A range of documents including advice on clinical presentations, control of infection, and laboratory investigations are available on the HPA website [1].

Updates on cases in reported in Scotland are published daily on the Health Protection Scotland website [2].

References

1. http://www.hpa.org.uk/HPA/Topics/InfectiousDiseases/InfectionsAZ/1265637163487.

2. http://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk.

Confirmed measles in England and Wales – update to end-January 2010

No measles cases were confirmed in England and Wales in January 2010, continuing the low incidence in the previous two months: December 2009 (one case) and November 2009 (two cases).

There were 140 notifications of suspected measles in January 2010 and 128 saliva swabs were tested in the Centre for Infections. Of these five samples were IgM reactive. In all five cases, clinical symptoms and results were attributable to recent MMR vaccination.

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Travel Health

Hepatitis A outbreak in France

The National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) has reported on a recent increase in cases of hepatitis A in 18 metropolitan departments of France, associated with consumption of sundried tomatoes imported from Turkey [1, 2] . A similar and possibly linked outbreak was reported in Australia during 2009 where sundried tomatoes were also implicated.

NaTHNaC advises that all travellers should practise food, water and personal hygiene precautions especially in regions and countries experiencing outbreaks. Hepatitis A can also be prevented by vaccination. Vaccine recommendations for France are available on the NaTHNaC Country Information Pages.

References

1. NaTHNaC. Hepatitis outbreak in France, Clinical Update 9 March 2009 [online] [accessed 12 March 2010]. Available at: http://www.nathnac.org/pro/clinical_updates/hepatitisa_france_090310.htm.
2. The Institute for Public Health, France, Outbreak of hepatitis A, France, November 2009 - February 2010, 1 March 2010, [Accessed 09 March 2010]. Available at: http://www.invs.sante.fr/display/?doc=surveillance/hepatite_a/point_vha_020310.htm.

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Future routine reports on travel-associated infections

The *Health Protection Report* is no longer publishing quarterly reports on travel-associated infections. Instead annual data will be available on the travel pages of the main HPA website. This *HPR* Travel Health page will in future publish summaries of, and links to, selected clinical updates on travel health issues produced by the National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC), and related articles.

NaTHNaC is an HPA-commissioned organisation which provides expert and evidence-based travel health advice for health professionals who are advising travellers. These clinical updates are produced in response to international outbreaks (or other events such as natural disasters) that may affect British travellers and/or to highlight any significant changes to travel health advice. A full list of previous clinical updates is available on the NaTHNaC website.

Enteric

General outbreaks of foodborne illness in humans (England and Wales, weeks 05-08/2010)

Preliminary information has been received about the following outbreaks.

Health Protection Unit	Organism	Location of food prepared or served	Month of outbreak	Number ill	Cases positive	Suspect vehicle	Evidence
Yorkshire & Humberside	Norovirus	Restaurant	Feb-10	23	–	Oysters	D
Greater Manchester	D&V	Restaurant	Feb-10	11	–	Oysters	D
AGW HPU - (Wiltshire team)	D&V	Private setting	Feb-10	25	–	n/a	–
Dorset & Somerset (Dorset)	D&V	Hotel	Feb-10	15	–	n/a	–
East Midlands South	D&V (suspected norovirus)	Restaurant	Feb-10	16	–	Oysters	n/a

D = (descriptive): other evidence, usually descriptive, reported by local investigators as indicating the suspect vehicle or food.

Common gastrointestinal infection laboratory reports (England and Wales, weeks 05-08/2010)

Laboratory reports	Number of reports received				Total reports	Cumulative total	
	05/10	06/10	07/10	08/10	05-08/10	01-08/10	01-08/09
Campylobacter	935	992	785	827	3539	6774	5315
***Escherichia coli* O157 ***	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Salmonella †	97	95	85	69	346	748	690
Shigella sonnei	7	9	6	16	38	68	133
Rotavirus	438	622	731	823	2614	3426	3396
Norovirus	539	587	511	635	2272	4672	2597
Cryptosporidium	36	34	31	31	132	299	261
Giardia	63	70	48	47	228	494	368

* Vero cytotoxin–producing isolates: data from HPA's Laboratory of Enteric Pathogens (LEP).
† Data from LEP.

Salmonella infection laboratory reports (faecal specimens, England and Wales, January 2010)

The breakdown of serotypes of the 428 salmonella infections (provisional data) reported to the Health Protection Agency Laboratory of Enteric Pathogens (LEP) in January 2010 (reports from the HPA salmonella data set) was as follows:

Organism	Cases (January 2010)
S. Enteritidis PT4	255
S. Enteritidis (other PTs)	852
S. Typhimurium	193
S. Virchow	38
Total salmonella (provisional data)	**1667**

Hospital norovirus outbreaks (England and Wales, weeks 05-08/2010)

The norovirus outbreaks in hospitals reporting scheme recorded 186 suspected and confirmed norovirus outbreaks occurring between weeks 05 and 08 2010. This is lower than the number reported in the previous period (weeks 1-4). Eighty one percent (152) of these outbreaks involved some kind of ward closure or restriction to admissions and seventy percent (130) were laboratory confirmed.

Suspected and laboratory-confirmed reported norovirus outbreaks in hospitals, with regional breakdown: outbreaks occurring in weeks 05–08/2010

	Outbreaks between weeks 05–08/2010			Total outbreaks 01/2010 – 08/2010		
	Outbreaks	Ward closure	Lab-confirmed	Outbreaks	Ward closure	Lab-confirmed
East of England	8	8	8	20	20	19
East Midlands	16	14	13	33	30	27
London	8	8	5	30	26	17
North East	6	4	6	19	14	11
North West	22	10	15	50	28	31
South East	34	32	17	82	73	44
South West	45	39	36	128	104	107
West Midlands	22	22	17	40	40	28
Yorkshire & Humberside	25	15	13	70	46	47
Total	**186**	**152**	**130**	**472**	**381**	**331**

Comparison of laboratory reports for the 2008/09 and 2009/2010 seasons

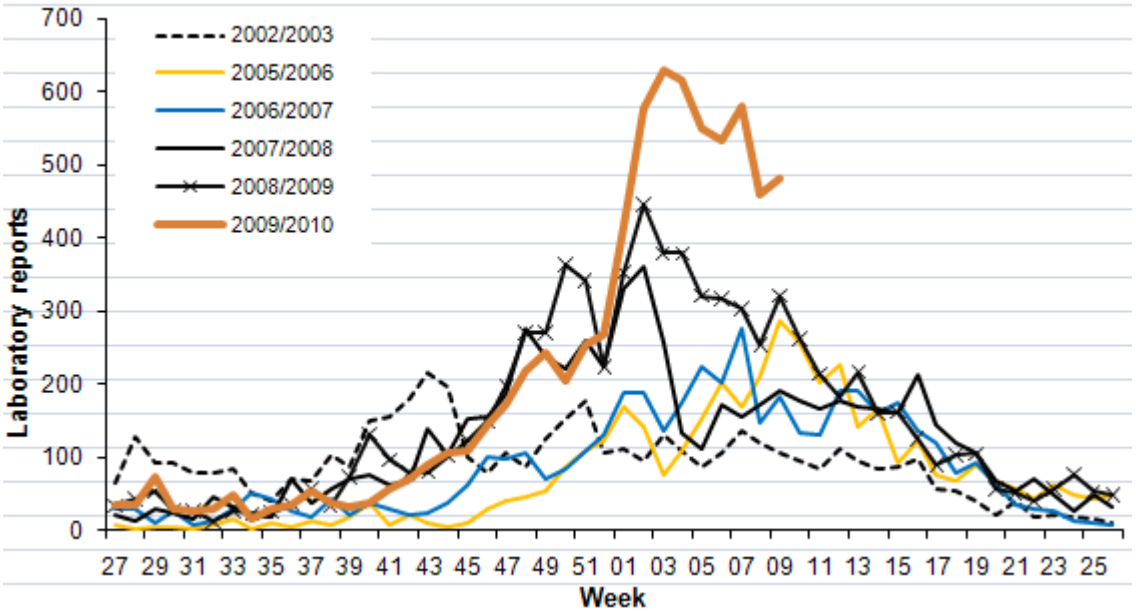
The hospital outbreak data in the above report (columns 2-4, outbreaks during the calendar weeks 5 to 8 of 2010) cover the eighth month of the current 2009/2010 norovirus season*.

The total number of laboratory reports, to week-08/10**, since the beginning of the current season, was 7302, which is 22% higher than in the same period of the 2008/2009 season (5976 between week-27/08 and week-08/09).

There was a rapid increase in the number of laboratory reports seen in the beginning of 2010. The number of laboratory reports in the first six weeks of 2010 (3239) was twice number reported for the last six weeks of 2009 (1591).* The number of laboratory reports has now fallen from the peak in week 02 of this year; there was a slight rise in week six (see figure below). The data from both systems are dynamic, therefore the total number of reports in the later weeks will increase as further reports are received.

* The norovirus season runs from July to June (week-27 in year one to week-26 in year two) in order to capture the winter peak in one season.
** N.B. The period week-27/09 to week-04/10 included a week-53/09.

Seasonal comparison of norovirus laboratory reports, England and Wales (2002 – 2009)



General outbreaks of foodborne illness in humans, England and Wales (final information, July to September 2009)

Final information on general outbreaks of foodborne illness: July to September 2009

Health Protection Unit	Organism	Location of food prepared or served	Number ill	Cases positive	Suspect vehicle	Evidence
West Midlands East (Birmingham)	*S. aureus*	Café	47	4	Tuna, chicken and cheese sandwiches	M
East Midlands North	Not known	Restaurant	15	0	Not known	n/a
Hampshire & Isle Of White	*Bacillus subtilis*	Restaurant	14	0	Not known	n/a
North Yorkshire & Humber	*E. coli* O157 PT8 VT 1&2	Pub	31	11	Not known	n/a
North West London	D&V	Hall	60	0	Not known	n/a
Dorset and Somerset (Dorset)	Not known	Restaurant	3	0	Oysters	D
South West	Mixed (Norovirus and campylobacter)	Hall	26	5	Not known	n/a
West Yorkshire	*S.* Enteritidis PT 5a	Restaurant	14	5	Garlic mayonnaise	M, S
West Midlands East (Birmingham)	Not known	Restaurant	20	0	Not known	n/a
North West London	*S.* Enteritidis PT 14b	Café	3	2	Egg mayonnaise	M
Norfolk	*S.* Enteritidis PT 1	Restaurant	10	8	Eggs	D
South West London	Campylobacter	Hotel	10	3	Chicken liver parfait	D
South West London	Campylobacter	School	24	8	Chicken curry	S
Greater Manchester	*S.* Enteritidis PT 14b	Restaurant	13	11	Chicken noodle dish	D
East Midlands North	S. Enteritidis PT 14b	Restaurant	9	6	Not known	n/a
North East (Northumberland, Tyne and Wear)	*S.* Enteritidis PT 14b	Nursing Home	8	8	–	n/a
South East London	*S.* Typhimurium DT 193	School	58	17	School meals (unspecified)	S
Greater Manchester	S. Enteritidis PT 14b & 8	Restaurant	5	5	Duck wrap, chicken skewers	M, D
North East (County Durham & Tees Valley)	*C. perfringens*	Nursing Home	28	10	Roast beef joint	M
London North East & North Central	*S.* Enteritidis PT 1	Restaurant	8	6	Buffet foods (unspecified)	M, D
Thames Valley	D&V	Restaurant	11	0	–	n/a
Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire	*S.* Enteritidis PT 14b	Café	2	2	Tuna, chicken and cheese sandwiches	D

M = (microbiological): identification of an organism of the same type from cases and in the suspect vehicle, or vehicle ingredient(s), or detection of toxin in faeces or food;
D = (descriptive): other evidence, usually descriptive, reported by local investigators as indicating the suspect vehicle or food;
S = (statistical): a significant statistical association between consumption of the suspect vehicle(s) and being a case.

Salmonella serotypes recorded in the Health Protection Agency salmonella data set (provisional information, October to December 2009)

All serotypes recorded in the HPA salmonella data set in the fourth quarter of 2009 are listed below. There were more than ten reports of 23 serotypes, two to ten reports of 52 serotypes, and one report of 56 serotypes.

More than 10 reports of the following serotypes were received

Serotype	No. of Reports	Serotype	No. of Reports
S. Agona	11	*S*. Montevideo	13
S. Anatum	19	*S*. Newport	55
S. Arizonae	16	*S*. Oranienburg	16
S. Braenderup	15	*S*. Saint-Paul	30
S. Corvallis	20	*S*. Schwarzengrund	15
S. Enteritidis	967	*S*. Senftenberg	12
S. Haifa	16	*S*. Stanley	18
S. Infantis	31	*S*. Typhimurium	440
S. Java	46	*S*. Unnamed	74
S. Kentucky	40	*S*. Virchow	47
S. Mbandaka	20	*S*. Weltevreden	11
S. Mississippi	16		

Between two and 10 reports of each of the following serotypes were received

Serotype	No. of Reports	Serotype	No. of Reports
S. Aberdeen	2	*S*. Kottbus	8
S. Abony	5	*S*. Litchfield	3
S. Adelaide	3	*S*. London	3
S. Agama	6	*S*. Mikawasima	2
S. Ajiobo	4	*S*. Muenchen	6
S. Albany	3	*S*. Muenster	3
S. Apapa	2	*S*. Ohio	2
S. Bareilly	8	*S*. Okatie	3
S. Bovis-Morbificans	4	*S*. Oslo	5
S. Brandenburg	2	*S*. Panama	2
S. Bredeney	3	*S*. Penarth	2
S. Butantan	3	*S*. Plymouth	3
S. Cerro	2	*S*. Pomona	2
S. Chester	5	*S*. Poona	2
S. Colindale	2	*S*. Potsdam	2
S. Derby	4	*S*. Reading	2
S. Drypool	2	*S*. Richmond	3
S. Durham	3	*S*. Rissen	3
S. Give	3	*S*. Rubislaw	2
S. Gold-Coast	10	*S*. San-Diego	2
S. Hadar	8	*S*. Stanleyville	2
S. Havana	3	*S*. Tel-El-Kebir	3
S. Heidelberg	9	*S*. Tennessee	7
S. Hvittingfoss	3	*S*. Uganda	4
S. Indiana	5	*S*. Wassenaar	5
S. Javiana	6	*S*. Zanzibar	6

One each of the following serotypes were received

S. Agbeni; *S.* Alachua; *S.* Arechavaleta; *S.* Bama; *S.* Be; *S.* Binza; *S.* Blockley; *S.* Bonn; *S.* Chomedy; *S.* Cotham; *S.* Cubana; *S.* Dresden; *S.* Dublin; *S.* Emek; *S.* Fluntern; *S.* Galiema; *S.* Goelzau; *S.* Grumpensis; *S.* Holcomb; *S.* Irumu; *S.* Jangwani; *S.* Kaolack; *S.* Kedougou; *S.* Kiambu; *S.* Kingston; *S.* Kintambo; *S.* Kisarawe; *S.* Kotte; *S.* Lagos; *S.* Lohbruegge; *S.* Marina; *S.* Mgulani; *S.* Miami; *S.* Monschaui; *S.* Napoli; *S.* New-Brunswick; *S.* Nola; *S.* Nyanza; *S.* Offa; *S.* Remo; *S.* Ridge; *S.* Runby; *S.* Seremban; *S.* Serrekunda; *S.* Sinstorf; *S.* Soerenga; *S.* Sofia; *S.* Szentes; *S.* Takoradi; *S.* Thompson; *S.* Ughelli; *S.* Umbilo; *S.* Urbana; *S.* Vitkin; *S.* Wien; and *S.* Worthington.

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