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Prepared by: Emma McBryde, Medical Epidemiologist

Introduction

This commentary is prepared every Tuesday, to provide extra information and guidance in the interpretation of the Victorian Summary Report and the DoH Regional Comparisons. This commentary refers to notifications processed between 1 and 7 September 2009 inclusive, so the numbers mentioned here may differ slightly from the published summary tables.

While they are not displayed on the web reports, reference is often made in this commentary to the 'expected levels' of notification, and to the '5-year baseline'. This baseline is calculated by averaging the counts for the same disease in the same 28-day period for each of the past 5 years, together with the 28-day periods immediately before and after the current one in the same five years. This allows a comparison with the current counts that is less affected by week-to-week and seasonal variation.

Communicable diseases this week

Blood-borne diseases

There have been three cases of newly acquired hepatitis B notified and five cases of newly acquired hepatitis C notified this week. The year-to-date numbers of each are approximately the same as the last two years.

Enteric diseases

There have been 20 hepatitis A cases notified in the last seven days. Of the 15 that have been interviewed, 12 report consumption of sun-dried tomatoes. All have no classical risk factors.

One case of typhoid was notified this week. The case had no travel history or identifiable risk factors.

One case of verotoxin-producing *E. coli* was notified this week. Gardening may have been the source of exposure to the organism.

One case of listeriosis was reported in an elderly woman who had some immune suppression.

In the last week, no cases of paratyphoid, shigellosis or hepatitis E were notified.

Other infectious notifiable diseases

One notification of confirmed invasive meningococcal disease was received in the last week, serogroup as yet unknown. There have been no further cases of *Neisseria meningitidis* serogroup C, the strain prevented by the current vaccine, since the one case reported in January.

One notification of *Legionella* infection has been received in the last week.

Nine cases of tuberculosis were reported this week. One case of *Mycobacterium ulcerans* infection has been reported.

Sexually transmissible infections

Rates of chlamydia and gonococcal infection are high this year compared with previous years, with over 10,000 cases of *Chlamydia trachomatis* infection and over 1200 cases of *Neisseria gonorrhoea* infection notified this year-to-date.

Early syphilis notifications are down this year compared with last but remain relatively high at 280 so far this year.

Data for HIV/AIDS are available in the [monthly surveillance reports](#), Victorian Infectious Diseases Bulletin, published on the internet and in hard copy.

Vaccine preventable diseases

Influenza

Notifications of influenza are falling, returning to close to baseline activity. Only 27 cases of influenza B have been reported this year to date compared with 613 for the same time last year. Of interest eight aged care facility outbreaks have been reported this winter involving residents of these facilities, none of which were influenza A H1N1, while one outbreak involved a staff member with H1N1, and none of the residents developed influenza.

Information about the current situation for H1N1 novel influenza virus in Victoria is available at <http://www.humanswineflu.health.vic.gov.au> Follow the links for further information.

Information about the global situation is available on the WHO website: http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/notes/h1n1_situation_20090724/en/index.html.

Other vaccine preventable diseases

One notification of a polio-like virus found in the stool of a neonate was reported this week. Further investigation is underway to assess whether this is a vaccine strain or wild-type polio. There is no immediate travel history from the family. The child was born four weeks ago in Victoria.

Pertussis notifications continue well above baseline this year with 2,779 notifications, approximately three times as many as most years. This is also true for NSW and other jurisdictions.

There were seven cases of invasive pneumococcal disease reported this week. One case of measles was notified this week in an unvaccinated 16 year old with no travel history or clear exposure.

No cases of tetanus, mumps, *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib) or poliomyelitis have been received this month. There are no confirmed cases of rubella reported this fortnight.

The year to date total for varicella-zoster virus infection notifications is 1,234.

Vector-borne diseases

One case of dengue was reported this week.

One case of Ross River Virus infection was reported this week.

No cases of Murray Valley encephalitis, chikungunya, Barmah Forest virus or malaria were reported this week.

Zoonoses

One case of psittacosis was reported this week.

No confirmed notifications of Q-fever, anthrax, brucellosis or leptospirosis have been reported this week.

Related surveillance reports

During the influenza 'season' sentinel influenza surveillance reports are available from the Victorian Infectious Diseases Reference Laboratory (VIDRL) website at: http://www.vidrl.org.au/labsandunits/epidemiology/programs/epi_programs_flu.htm

National surveillance reports and data are available at: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/cda-about.htm-copy2>

Further information

For further information please contact Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Unit at the Department of Health on telephone 1300 651 160.