

Table 4. Resistance to other antimicrobials in gonococci, WHO Western Pacific Region, 1995

Antimicrobial	Country	Strains tested	Resistant	
			Number	%
Kanamycin	Malaysia	53	2	3.8
Cefuroxime	Malaysia	53	0	0
Cephaclor	Vietnam	87	3	3.5
Chloramphenicol	New Caledonia	19	0	0
	Vietnam	97	14	14.4
Augmentin	Fiji	977	7	0.7
Azithromycin	Singapore	253	0	0

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OVERSEAS BRIEFS

Source: World Health Organization (WHO)

Viral meningitis, Romania, update

By 23 September a total of 450 cases of viral meningitis had been reported in the outbreak which started in Bucharest at the end of July. The number of new cases has decreased. More than half the cases occurred in adults and more than 200 were in people over 60 years of age. Thirty-nine patients died. The WHO Collaborating Centre for Reference and Research on Arboviruses and Haemorrhagic Fevers at the Pasteur Institute, France has confirmed infection with West Nile virus in 89% of the patients investigated. Infection with West Nile virus can be asymptomatic or cause an influenza-like illness. Severe manifestations include meningitis and meningoencephalitis, particularly in the elderly. Migratory birds are the natural reservoir; the virus is transmitted to humans by *Culex* mosquitoes. The virus has been detected in Europe but is more common further south, in the Mediterranean region, Africa and western Asia. Precautions

against infection include avoiding mosquito bites either through protective clothing or mosquito repellents

Polio, Albania

An outbreak of paralytic illness has been reported by Albania. The first cases were reported in April 1996, but there was a sharp increase in cases occurring in late July and August. Additional cases continue to be reported. The clinical picture was acute onset, asymmetric flaccid paralysis typical of poliomyelitis. A WHO team is assisting the Albanian Ministry of Health in investigating the outbreak. The team has investigated 66 cases of paralytic illness. There were seven deaths. WHO reference laboratories in Italy and the Netherlands have now isolated wild poliovirus type 1 from seven cases. The Ministry of Health, with the support of WHO, UNICEF and others is planning to immunise both adults and children with oral polio vaccine.

Influenza, Argentina

Cases and outbreaks of influenza-like illness were reported in Cordoba, Mendoza and Santa Fe, Argentina, during June and July. Activity in Cordoba affected mainly adults and reached a peak at the end of July. Specimens obtained in all 3 cities are under investigation at the Na-

tional Influenza Centre in Cordoba. So far, influenza A(H3N2) virus was isolated from 2 of 35 specimens collected among factory workers in Cordoba in July and influenza A was diagnosed by immunofluorescence in 6 of 18 cases among children and adults in Santa Fe.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES SURVEILLANCE

National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System

The NNDSS is conducted under the auspices of the Communicable Diseases Network Australia-New Zealand. The system coordinates the national surveillance of 41 communicable diseases or disease groups endorsed by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). Notifications of these diseases are made to State and Territory health authorities under the provisions of their respective public health legislation. De-identified core unit data are supplied fortnightly for collation, analysis and dissemination. For further information, see CDI 1996;20:9-10.

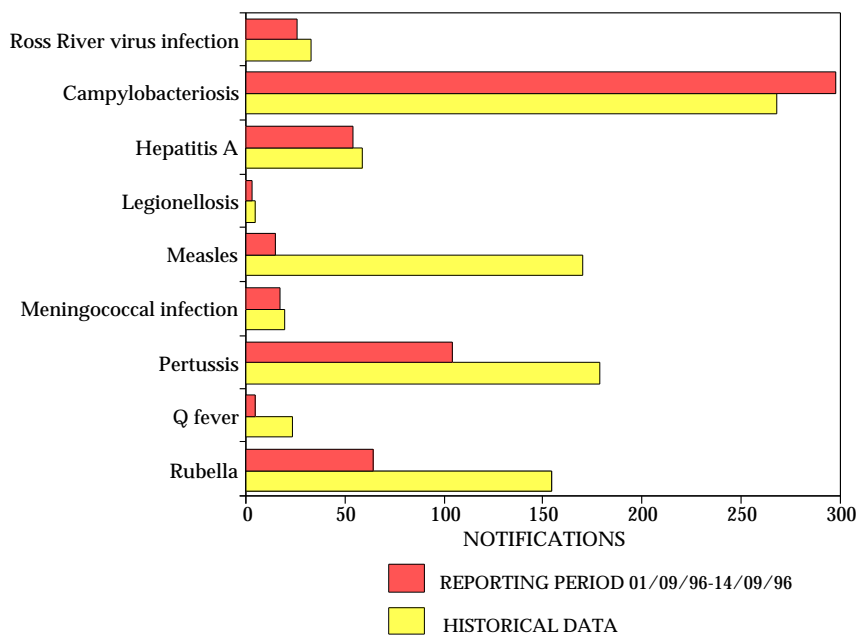
Reporting period 1 to 14 September 1996

There were 1,289 notifications received for this two-week period (Tables 1, 2 and 3). For Victoria new data was only available for the sexually transmissible diseases this fortnight. The numbers of reports for selected diseases have been compared with average data for this period in the previous three years (Figure 1).

One hundred and four notifications of **pertussis** were received this fortnight. The number of cases reported in recent months has been low compared with the same period last year (Figure 2). A total of 1,961 cases with onset dates in 1996 has been received so far. Two hundred and sixty-seven (14%) of these were for children under the age of 5 years, with 624 (32%) being for the under 10 years age group (Figure 3).

Rubella was reported for 64 persons this fortnight. The number of notifications has remained low in recent months (Figure 4). Of the notifications received for 1996, 44% were for the 15 to 24 years age group and the male:female ratio was 1.9:1 (Figure 5).

Figure 1. Selected National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System reports, and historical data^{1,2}



1. The historical data are the averages of the number of notifications in 9 previous 2-week reporting periods: the corresponding periods of the last 3 years and the periods immediately preceding and following those.
2. No data were included from Victoria.