

NATIONAL AWARD FOR INJURY PREVENTION

Recently, on behalf of NSW Health, Pam Albany, Principal Policy Officer, Injury Prevention Policy Unit, accepted a National Kidsafe Child Safety Award for the work by the Injury Prevention Policy Unit's in the *Hot Water Burns Like Fire* program. The award recognises the contribution of the Health Promotion Branch; and most particularly that of Dr Jane Elkington, former Manager of the Injury Prevention Program in NSW Health, and who was recently guest editor of the *NSW Public Health Bulletin's* two-part injury series.

The *Hot Water Burns Like Fire* program is described in detail in the October 1999 issue of the *Bulletin* (Volume 10, Number 10). The program was instrumental in achieving changes to the plumbing and drainage codes across Australia, to provide requirements for the delivery of hot water to bathing areas to be less than 50°C. An intersectoral program, it engaged the plumbing and building industries, parents, and a broad range of health professionals, in particular the health promotion staff in most area health services in NSW. Most health departments of other states have now adopted the range of health promotion activities developed by NSW Health around the issue. In NSW the program has resulted in a 25 per cent reduction in serious scalds to children aged 0–5 years. The program is estimated to have saved NSW Health as much as \$13 million since the program started, and has prevented enormous pain and suffering on the part of young children and their families.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES, NSW: JANUARY–FEBRUARY 2000

TRENDS

Reports of notifiable infectious diseases were generally unremarkable for the last part of 1999 (Table 4 and 5, Figure 3). Compared with previous months, case reports of hepatitis A, meningococcal disease and salmonellosis declined in November and December in NSW. To date, case reports of arbovirus infections and cryptosporidiosis for this summer have not been as frequent as in some previous years. However, delays in reports over the holiday period may account for apparent declines in other diseases.

A CASE OF BOTULISM

In early November 1999, a man from Western Sydney developed generalised hypotonic areflexic paralysis that began in his facial muscles and rapidly spread to all his limbs. Within a few hours he required admission to an Intensive Care Unit for respiratory support. A clinical diagnosis of botulism was made and the public health unit was notified. The patient had no wounds that could have been related to wound botulism. Interviews with the patient's neighbour and relatives established that the patient lived alone and had a diet of limited variety that was unlikely to include foods recognised to be associated with botulism. However, the patient's neighbour had incomplete knowledge of the foods the patient had eaten during the days immediately before the illness. The diagnosis was confirmed (toxin type E) by mouse bioassay on samples of serum collected early during the admission.

Selected foods found in the patient's rubbish and house were negative for botulinum toxin. Interview of the patient was delayed until he had recovered sufficiently. The patient's recollection of foods that he ate in the days immediately prior to admission was incomplete. He confirmed that his diet was of limited variety and when closely questioned about foods normally suspect as causes of botulism was unable to identify any that he had recently consumed and may have been a source of the toxin.

Food-borne botulism is caused by the ingestion of toxin produced by *Clostridium botulinum*. The toxin is typically found in improperly processed, preserved, low acid or alkaline foods where anaerobic conditions have occurred at some stage. The incubation period can vary from six hours to eight days, but is commonly 12 to 36 hours. Food-borne botulism presents with marked lassitude, weakness and vertigo, usually followed by double vision, dry mouth and progressive difficulty in speaking and swallowing (cranial nerve involvement) and may progress to descending weakness or flaccid paralysis. The case-fatality rate is up to 10 per cent. The clinical diagnosis is supported by electromyography, and identification of toxin in stool, gastric aspirate, serum or suspected foods. All suspected cases should be immediately notified to the local public health unit, where staff can investigate the likely cause, facilitate tests and—crucially—prevent further exposures to contaminated food. ☒

FIGURE 3

REPORTS OF SELECTED INFECTIOUS DISEASES, NSW, JANUARY 1995 TO DECEMBER 1999, BY MONTH OF ONSET

These are preliminary data: case counts in recent months may increase because of reporting delays

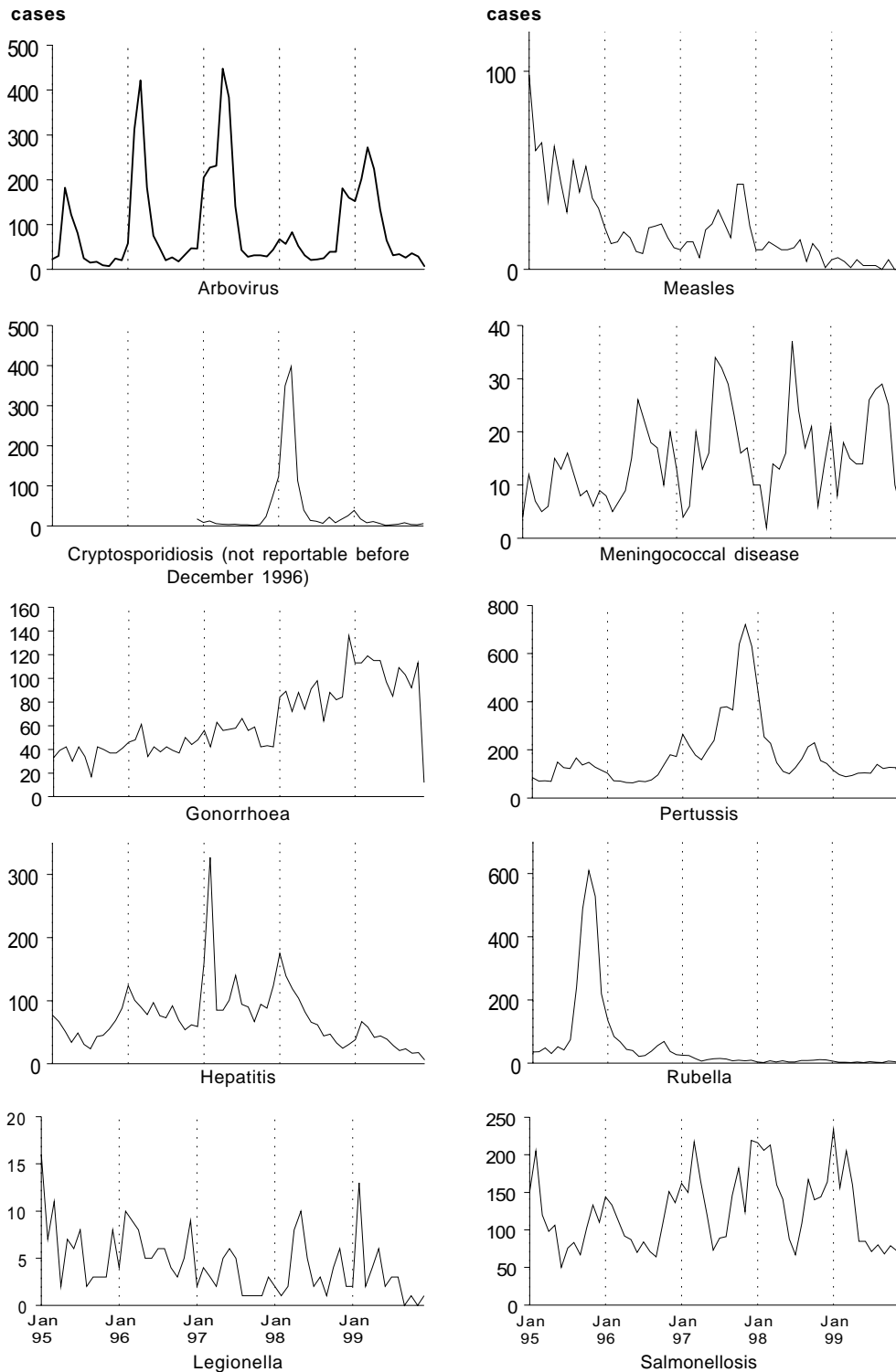


TABLE 4

REPORTS OF NOTIFIABLE CONDITIONS RECEIVED IN NOVEMBER 1999 BY AREA HEALTH SERVICES

Condition	Area Health Service (1999) Total																	for Nov†	To date†	
	CSA	NSA	WSA	WEN	SWS	CCA	HUN	ILL	SES	NRA	MNC	NEA	MAC	MWA	FWA	GMA	SA			
Blood-borne and sexually transmitted																				
AIDS	5	-	4	-	-	-	5	1	4	1	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	23	137	
HIV infection*	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	19	361	
Hepatitis B - acute viral*	1	-	-	1	1	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	8	65	
Hepatitis B - other*	85	45	50	3	9	5	9	8	50	2	4	2	-	-	11	1	-	284	3,341	
Hepatitis C - acute viral*	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	49	
Hepatitis C - other*	86	45	133	37	15	44	85	22	116	35	43	12	6	29	12	16	16	753	8,036	
Hepatitis D - unspecified*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	16	
Hepatitis, acute viral (not otherwise specified)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Chancroid*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
Chlamydia (genital)*	20	5	18	4	5	6	30	8	50	19	14	12	-	2	18	5	1	217	2,162	
Gonorrhoea*	22	5	8	3	8	-	2	3	54	-	1	3	3	-	7	1	-	120	1,203	
Syphilis	15	-	7	-	2	-	1	-	2	3	1	1	1	1	4	-	-	38	594	
Vector-borne																				
Arboviral infection (BFV)*	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	2	-	2	7	-	-	-	-	1	-	14	248	
Arboviral infection (RRV)*	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	5	3	2	2	-	-	2	3	20	1,063	
Arboviral infection (Other)*	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	16	
Malaria*	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	6	167	
Zoonoses																				
Brucellosis*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	
Leptospirosis*	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	5	49	
Q fever*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	1	1	3	2	2	1	2	19	151	
Respiratory and other																				
Blood lead level*	9	4	-	1	15	1	7	9	-	1	2	1	-	-	38	1	-	89	677	
Legionnaires' Longbeachae*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	
Legionnaires' Pneumophila*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21	
Legionnaires' (Other)*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	
Leprosy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
Meningococcal infection (invasive)	1	2	1	1	3	-	1	1	3	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	15	209	
Mycobacterial tuberculosis	7	4	5	-	6	2	-	-	8	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	35	391	
Mycobacteria other than TB	2	8	-	-	-	2	2	-	5	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	21	364	
Vaccine-preventable																				
Adverse event after immunisation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21
H.influenzae b infection (invasive)*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	
Measles	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	32	
Mumps*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	28	
Pertussis	7	28	13	2	15	8	11	3	18	3	10	2	8	10	1	14	19	172	1,277	
Rubella*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	42	
Tetanus	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Faecal-oral																				
Botulism	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	
Cholera*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	
Cryptosporidiosis*	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	4	119	
Giardiasis*	4	12	3	2	-	6	4	-	12	3	3	3	1	1	-	1	-	55	983	
Food borne illness (not otherwise specified)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	27	
Gastroenteritis (in an institution)	6	-	35	-	9	2	26	-	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	96	508	
Haemolytic uraemic syndrome	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	
Hepatitis A*	1	4	3	-	-	1	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	14	401	
Hepatitis E*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	8	
Listeriosis*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21	
Salmonellosis (not otherwise specified)*	9	16	-	6	-	4	16	4	3	8	10	3	-	4	-	3	6	92	1,378	
Typhoid and paratyphoid*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	27	
Verotoxin producing Ecoli*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

* lab-confirmed cases only

† includes cases with unknown postcode

CSA = Central Sydney Area
NSA = Northern Sydney AreaWSA = Western Sydney Area
WEN = Wentworth Area
SWS = South Western Sydney AreaCCA = Central Coast Area
HUN = Hunter Area
ILL = Illawarra AreaSES = South Eastern Sydney Area
NRA = Northern Rivers Area
MNC = North Coast AreaNEA = New England Area
MAC = Macquarie Area
MWA = Mid Western AreaFWA = Far West Area
GMA = Greater Murray Area

TABLE 5 REPORTS OF NOTIFIABLE CONDITIONS RECEIVED IN DECEMBER 1999 BY AREA HEALTH SERVICES

Condition	Area Health Service (1999)																	Total		
	CSA	NSA	WSA	WEN	SWS	CCA	HUN	ILL	SES	NRA	MNC	NEA	MAC	MWA	FWA	GMA	SA	for Dec†	To date†	
Blood-borne and sexually transmitted																				
AIDS	3	3	1	-	3	-	1	6	8	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	1	30	167	
HIV infection*	-	-	-	-	Reported every two months				-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	361
Hepatitis B - acute viral*	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	4	68	
Hepatitis B - other*	43	36	-	-	6	4	8	11	51	4	2	6	-	-	8	1	3	183	3,520	
Hepatitis C - acute viral*	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	51	
Hepatitis C - other*	53	37	23	13	17	24	64	17	70	33	20	18	2	28	10	19	17	465	8,466	
Hepatitis D - unspecified*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	
Hepatitis, acute viral (not otherwise specified)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Chancroid*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
Chlamydia (genital)*	7	6	10	3	5	3	12	15	25	14	5	6	-	2	7	9	3	137	2,295	
Gonorrhoea*	14	4	7	1	4	1	1	-	19	-	-	1	1	2	2	-	1	60	1,260	
Syphilis	8	-	2	-	1	-	-	1	2	1	4	-	-	-	3	-	-	22	615	
Vector-borne																				
Arboviral infection (BFV)*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	252	
Arboviral infection (RRV)*	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	2	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	4	-	11	1,074	
Arboviral infection (Other)*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	
Malaria*	-	1	2	-	-	-	1	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	174	
Zoonoses																				
Brucellosis*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	
Leptospirosis*	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	5	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	9	58	
Q fever*	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	1	2	-	2	1	-	-	10	161	
Respiratory and other																				
Blood lead level*	5	-	-	1	4	-	12	1	1	2	1	-	-	1	6	2	-	36	713	
Legionnaires' Longbeachae*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	
Legionnaires' Pneumophila*	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	22	
Legionnaires' (Other)*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	
Leprosy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
Meningococcal infection (invasive)	1	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	1	-	8	217	
Mycobacterial tuberculosis	4	1	4	-	6	1	1	-	7	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	27	418	
Mycobacteria other than TB	6	5	-	-	1	1	3	2	2	4	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	27	391	
Vaccine-preventable																				
Adverse event after immunisation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	22	
H.influenzae b infection (invasive)*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	
Measles	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	32	
Mumps*	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	29	
Pertussis	8	11	10	-	15	-	27	2	6	2	5	4	1	6	-	9	3	109	1,386	
Rubella*	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	43	
Tetanus	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	
Faecal-oral																				
Botulism	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
Cholera*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	
Cryptosporidiosis*	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	3	-	-	-	2	-	8	127	
Giardiasis*	4	9	5	3	1	-	7	4	1	5	4	5	1	-	5	2	-	56	1,039	
Food borne illness (not otherwise specified)	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	13	40	
Gastroenteritis (in an institution)	9	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	16	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	34	542	
Haemolytic uraemic syndrome	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	
Hepatitis A*	-	2	3	-	2	-	2	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	15	416	
Hepatitis E*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	9	
Listeriosis*	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	22	
Salmonellosis (not otherwise specified)*	6	17	-	9	1	-	12	3	2	10	5	5	-	3	5	1	1	80	1,458	
Typhoid and paratyphoid*	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	30	
Verotoxin producing Ecoli*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

* lab-confirmed cases only

† includes cases with unknown postcode

CSA = Central Sydney Area
NSA = Northern Sydney AreaWSA = Western Sydney Area
WEN = Wentworth Area
SWS = South Western Sydney AreaCCA = Central Coast Area
HUN = Hunter Area
ILL = Illawarra AreaSES = South Eastern Sydney Area
NRA = Northern Rivers Area
MNC = North Coast AreaNEA = New England Area
MAC = Macquarie Area
MWA = Mid Western AreaFWA = Far West Area
GMA = Greater Murray Area