

more difficult, because the mode of transmission is uncertain. Strategies include reducing exposures to potting mix and other soil dusts by moistening dusty materials, wearing masks, and thoroughly washing hands after gardening.

As for many infectious diseases, the identification of the exact source of a sporadic case of Legionnaires' disease is almost always impossible, because the causal organisms are common in the environment, and people are exposed to a wide range of potential sources every day (for example, aerosolised water from domestic or commercial water supplies, air conditioning systems, and dust). Nonetheless, early notification of cases allows PHU staff to investigate exposures that may be shared with other cases, suggesting a possible controllable source. While cases in the seven outbreaks reported here represent only a small proportion of all cases, it is very likely that prompt identification and control of the sources—as well as the more general alerts to building managers to ensure that cooling towers are checked and cleaned in the absence of an identified point source—help prevent further infections.

REFERENCES

1. Chin J (editor). *Control of Communicable Diseases Manual—17th edition*. Washington DC: American Public Health Association, 2000.
2. Edelstein PH. Legionnaires' disease. *Clin Infect Dis* 1993; 16: 741–49.
3. Stout JE, Yu VL, Muraca P, et al. Potable water as a cause of sporadic cases of community-acquired Legionnaires' disease. *N Engl J Med* 1992; 326: 151–55.
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Legionnaires' disease associated with potting soil—California, Oregon, and Washington, May–June 2000. *MMWR* 2000; 49: 777–8.
5. Cameron S, Roder D, Walker C, Feldheim J. Epidemiological characteristics of Legionella infection in South Australia: implications for disease control. *Aust NZ J Med* 1991; 1: 65–70.
6. Christopher PJ, Noonan LM, Chiew R. Epidemic of legionnaires' disease in Wollongong. *Med J Aust* 1987; 147: 127–128.
7. Levy M, Westley-Wise V, Blumer C, et al. Legionnaires' disease outbreak, Fairfield 1992: public health aspects. *Aust J Public Health* 1994; 18: 137–43.
8. Bell JC, Jorm LR, Williamson M, et al. Legionellosis linked with a hotel car park—how many were infected? *Epidemiol Infect* 1996; 116: 185–92.
9. Heath TC, Roberts C, Jalaludin D. Environmental investigation of a legionellosis outbreak in western Sydney: the role of molecular profiling. *Aust NZ J Public Health* 1998; 22: 428–31.
10. Jalaludin B, Chow C, Liddle J, et al. Legionnaires' disease outbreak in Western Sydney. *Comm Dis Intell* 1995; 19: 114–115.
11. Brown J, Hort K, Bouwman R, et al. Investigation and control of a cluster of cases of Legionnaires' disease in western Sydney. *Comm Dis Intell* 2001; 25: 63–66.
12. NSW Department of Health. Infectious diseases, NSW March 1999. *NSW Public Health Bulletin* 1999; 10: 22.
13. NSW Government. Public Health Act 1991—Regulation (Public Health Regulation 1991, NSW: Part 6—Microbial Control, 2000). Sydney: NSW Government, 2000. www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_reg/phcr2000380.
14. Australian New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 3666: Air-handling and water systems of buildings—Microbial Control, Part 1 (1995), Part 2 (1995) and Part 3 (1998). ☐

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES REPORT, OCTOBER 2001

TRENDS

Spring is the season when the number of **pertussis** infections tends to increase. Earlier hopes that the large pertussis epidemic was decreasing has not been fulfilled (Figure 1). Notifications of this disease have increased once more, and high numbers have been reported from many areas, notably Northern Sydney, Greater Murray, Northern Rivers and Macquarie health areas (Table 1). All age groups appear to be affected. We estimate that the epidemic will continue into the spring in very high numbers. Clinicians are urged to consider the diagnosis in patients with chronic coughing illnesses, especially if accompanied by inspiratory whooping, paroxysms, and post-tussive vomiting. The administration of erythromycin to cases and their immediate contacts can control further spread of the disease. Public health units can advise on the timing of this treatment. In addition, it is important to

remind both new parents and their visitors that people with coughing illnesses should avoid contact with young infants.

Cases of **meningococcal disease** were reported in line with seasonal expectations during winter. To the end of August, 177 cases of this disease were reported, including five people who have died. Intravenous penicillin can be life saving in suspected cases, and clinicians should notify suspected cases to their local public health unit in order to facilitate contact tracing and the instigation of preventive measures.

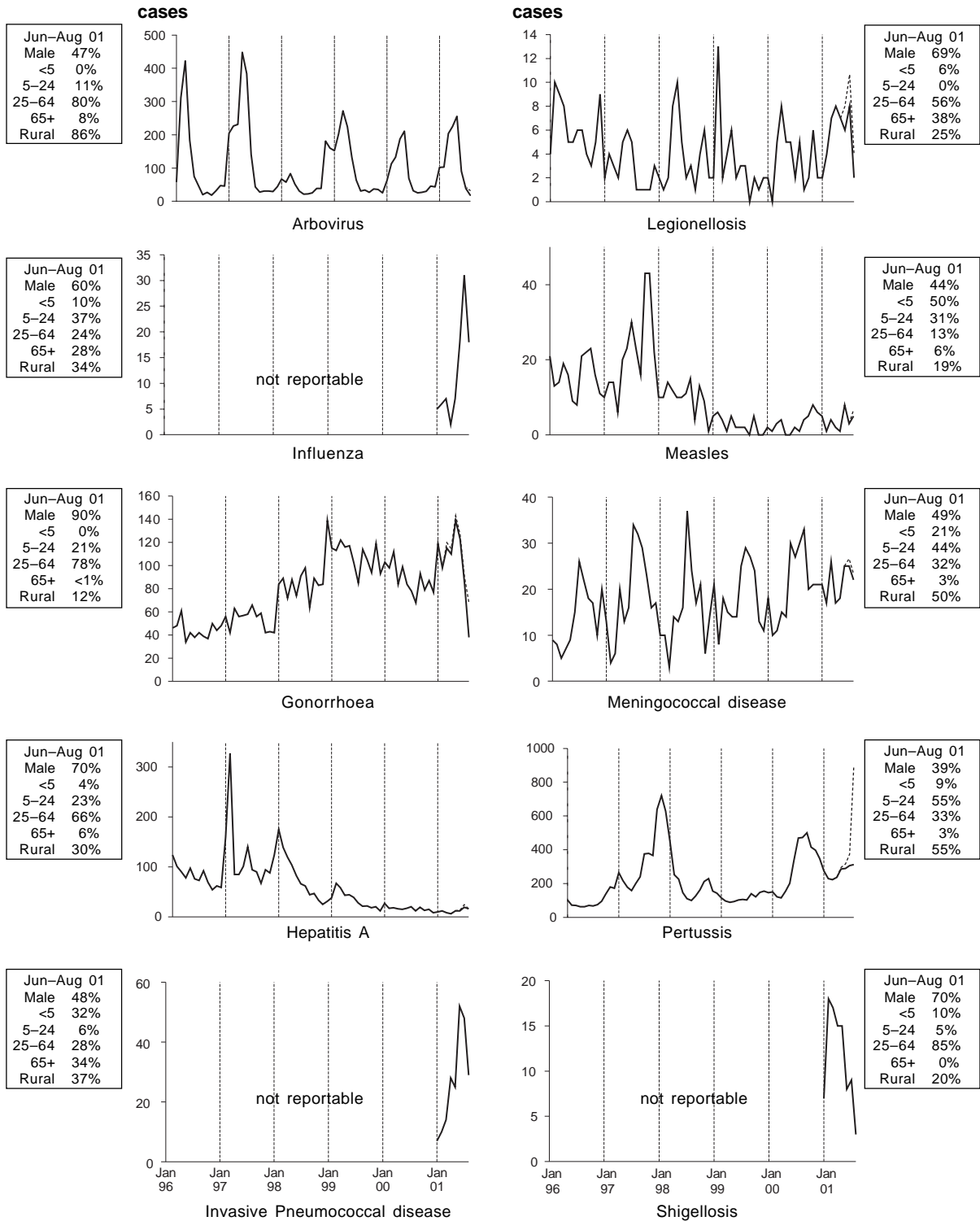
Reports of **influenza** appear to have peaked in August. Most cases were due to influenza A virus, and a minority were due to influenza B. The information that is available suggests that the 2001 influenza vaccine formulation protected against these strains. ☐

FIGURE 1

REPORTS OF SELECTED COMMUNICABLE DISEASES, NSW, JANUARY 1996 TO AUGUST 2001, BY MONTH OF ONSET

These are preliminary data: case counts for recent months may increase because of reporting delays. Laboratory-confirmed cases, except for measles, meningococcal disease and pertussis — actual predicted after adjusting for likely reporting delays.

| | |
|----------------|-----|
| NSW population | |
| Male | 50% |
| <5 | 7% |
| 5-24 | 28% |
| 25-64 | 52% |
| 65+ | 13% |



* For definition, see NSW Public Health Bulletin, April 2000

TABLE 1 REPORTS OF NOTIFIABLE CONDITIONS RECEIVED IN AUGUST 2001 BY AREA HEALTH SERVICES

| Condition | Area Health Service (2001) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Total for Aug† | Total To date† | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------------------|-------------------|-----|-----|-------|-------|
| | CSA | NSA | WSA | WEN | SWS | CCA | HUN | ILL | SES | NRA | MNC | NEA | MAC | MWA | | | FWA | GMA | SA | CHS |
| Blood-borne and sexually transmitted | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| AIDS | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | 66 |
| Chancroid* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Chlamydia (genital)* | 43 | 35 | 29 | 10 | - | 10 | - | 17 | 77 | 18 | 11 | 28 | 6 | 4 | - | 17 | - | - | 312 | 2,912 |
| Gonorrhoea* | 6 | 3 | 4 | - | - | 3 | - | - | 46 | - | 1 | 6 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 70 | 881 |
| Hepatitis B — acute viral* | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | 52 |
| Hepatitis B — other* | 81 | 36 | 23 | - | - | 9 | - | 8 | 55 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 2 | - | 3 | - | - | - | 230 | 2,830 |
| Hepatitis C — acute viral* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 94 |
| Hepatitis C — other* | 75 | 24 | 103 | 4 | - | 39 | - | 27 | 92 | 33 | 45 | 22 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 8 | - | 18 | 504 | 5,708 |
| Hepatitis D — unspecified* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 11 |
| HIV infection* | 2 | - | 2 | - | 1 | - | 5 | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 13 | 222 |
| Syphilis | 16 | - | 7 | - | - | 1 | - | - | 16 | 5 | 1 | 3 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 50 | 495 |
| Vector-borne | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Arboviral infection (BFV)* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 5 | 8 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 13 | 335 |
| Arboviral infection (Other)* | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | 5 | 46 |
| Arboviral infection (RRV)* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | 5 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 9 | 717 |
| Malaria* | - | 3 | 2 | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | - | - | 12 | 100 |
| Zoonoses | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Anthrax | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Brucellosis* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Leptospirosis* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 3 | 46 |
| Lysavirus | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Psittacosis | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | 20 |
| Q fever* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 6 | 96 |
| Respiratory and other | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Blood lead level* | - | 3 | - | - | - | 3 | - | 2 | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | 14 | 297 |
| Influenza | 4 | 2 | 6 | - | 1 | - | - | 2 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | - | - | - | 4 | - | - | 29 | 92 |
| Invasive pneumococcal infection | - | 5 | 6 | - | - | 3 | - | 4 | 9 | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | 29 | 209 |
| Legionnaires' longbeachae* | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 21 |
| Legionnaires' pneumophila* | - | 3 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | 25 |
| Legionnaires' (Other)* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Leprosy | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Meningococcal infection (invasive) | 1 | 2 | - | 1 | 5 | 3 | - | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | - | 3 | 2 | 1 | - | - | - | 26 | 177 |
| Tuberculosis | 6 | 5 | 2 | - | - | - | - | 2 | 6 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 22 | 241 |
| Vaccine-preventable | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Adverse event after immunisation | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 2 | 54 |
| H.influenzae b infection (invasive)* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 8 |
| Measles | - | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 5 | 30 |
| Mumps* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 18 |
| Pertussis | 9 | 114 | 38 | - | 36 | 7 | - | 24 | 16 | 44 | 20 | 21 | 35 | 14 | - | 62 | - | 440 | 2,413 | |
| Rubella* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 41 |
| Tetanus | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Faecal-oral | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Botulism | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Cholera* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| Cryptosporidiosis* | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | 110 |
| Food borne illness (not otherwise specified) | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 16 |
| Gastroenteritis (in an institution) | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 258 |
| Giardiasis* | - | 9 | 8 | - | - | 1 | - | - | 8 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 1 | - | 5 | - | - | 43 | 665 | |
| Haemolytic uraemic syndrome | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 5 |
| Hepatitis A* | 1 | 2 | 2 | - | 4 | 1 | - | - | 3 | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 15 | 103 | |
| Hepatitis E* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 9 |
| Listeriosis* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 11 |
| Salmonellosis (not otherwise specified)* | 6 | 11 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 2 | - | 2 | 18 | 3 | 3 | 5 | - | 2 | 1 | 5 | - | 66 | 1,155 | |
| Shigellosis | - | 3 | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 4 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 10 | 93 | |
| Typhoid and paratyphoid* | - | 1 | - | - | 2 | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | 27 | |
| Verotoxin producing E. coli* | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |

* lab-confirmed cases only † includes cases with unknown postcode

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| CSA = Central Sydney Area | WEN = Wentworth Area | NRA = Northern Rivers Area | MAC = Macquarie Area | GMA = Greater Murray Area |
| NSA = Northern Sydney Area | SWS = South Western Sydney Area | MNC = North Coast Area | MWA = Mid Western Area | SA = Southern Area |
| WSA = Western Sydney Area | CCA = Central Coast Area | NEA = New England Area | FWA = Far West Area | CHS = Corrections Health Service |