

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROFILES

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A bi-monthly newsletter for Ontario Public Health Units

Welcome Message

I am very pleased to introduce the premiere issue of *Communicable Disease Profiles*, which replaces the two former newsletters from the Disease Control Service: CD News & Views, and Vacs Facts. This newsletter provides a synopsis of communicable disease and immunization issues of interest to Ontario healthcare professionals. *Communicable Disease Profiles* is published every two months, and is distributed to all Ontario public health units.

My staff and I wish you all a prosperous New Year and we look forward to bringing you informative articles.

Sincerely,

Dr. Hanif S. Kassam
Physician Manager
Disease Control Service



Canada TB/HIV Study

Health Canada has funded a national study to determine the extent of tuberculosis (TB) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) co-infection. The study will also examine the rate of HIV testing of individuals with TB, because TB is higher in HIV infected individuals. However, co-infected TB/HIV individuals who are identified early, treatment can be initiated to reduce the progression to active TB disease.

In Ontario, approximately 700 cases of active TB are reported each year, which accounts for approximately 40% of all Canadian TB cases. Several Ontario public health units have been selected to participate in this study and have already been contacted.

Data is being collected on 1997 and 1998 TB cases through a detailed questionnaire. The data collected for the Ontario TB cases,

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specifically with TB/HIV co-infection and TB risk factors, will facilitate in the development of preventive, public health interventions and physician education activities, to complement the current TB control initiatives.

This study is expected to be completed by the end of 2002.

Quebec Antibiotic Resistance Study

A study has found that antibiotic resistance has increased in Quebec. Led by Dr. Karl Weiss, president of the *Groupe contre la Résistance aux Anti-Microbiens*, the EQUERE (*étude Québécoise des pathogènes respiratoires*) study evaluated the resistance level of the most common respiratory tract pathogens between October 1, 2000 and March 31, 2001. The research team tested 1,163 non-duplicate micro-organisms isolated in 9 centres in Quebec, and identified the following strains: 474 *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, 589 *Hemophilus influenzae/parainfluenzae*, and 100 *Moraxella calarrhalis*. Researchers then examined the resistance of the following :

- *Streptococcus pneumoniae* to: penicillin, cefuroxime, cefprozil, clarithromycin, azithromycin, ciprofloxacin, levofloxacin, moxifloxacin, gatifloxacin, clindamycin, and ABT-773.
- *Hemophilus influenzae* to: clarithromycin, cefuroxime, and cefprozil.

Invasive strains were isolated from a sterile site such as blood, CSF, or articular fluid. And non-invasive strains were isolated from other sites such as the respiratory tract, eye, and ear. Results showed that antibiotic resistance was higher in non-invasive strains than the invasive strains. Ten strains of *S. pneumoniae* were resistant to ABT-773, and all these strains were resistant to clarithromycin.

Dr. Weiss stated that "there was a significant difference in terms of resistance for *S. pneumoniae* strains between invasive and non-invasive strains for penicillin, clarithromycin, and ciprofloxacin. This raises the potential issue of the decreasing virulence of resistant strains."

* Dr. Karl Weiss presented the EQUERE study at the 41st Interscience Conference on Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy.

Upcoming Community and Hospital Infection Control Association (CHICA) Conference

The Community and Hospital Infection Control Association – Canada (CHICA – Canada) will be holding their National Education Conference at the Delta St. John's, in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. The event takes place from June 2, 2002 – June 5, 2002, and will cover topics in hospital, community and long-term care infection control, microbiology, and infectious disease. The pre-conference day will be held on June 2, 2002.

For further information, including registration, please contact the conference planner at the following co-ordinates:

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Five More Reportable Diseases in Ontario

Five additional diseases have been added to the existing list of *Reportable Diseases*, under the *Health Promotion and Protection Act (HPPA)*, *Ontario Regulation 559/91*. Hepatitis C is now both a reportable and communicable disease in Ontario.

The five new reportable diseases includes the following:

- smallpox
- hantavirus
- cyclosporiasis
- invasive streptococcal pneumoniae
- respiratory infection outbreaks in institutions

The 2002 edition of the *Reportable Diseases* list, case definitions for the added diseases, diagnostic information, and Qs & As, have already been distributed to all Ontario physicians.

