

The Pump Handle



"I had an interview with the Board of Guardians of St. James's parish, on the evening of Thursday, 7th September, and represented the above circumstances to them. In consequence of what I said, the handle of the pump was removed on the following day."

John Snow, 1855

July 2008 Topics

- Tularemia Case in North Dakota
- West Nile Virus Update
- Possible Foodborne Outbreak Associated With a Public Event
- New Division of Disease Control Employees



Tularemia Reported in North Dakota

A case of Tularemia was reported to the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) in July 2008. Since 1996, there have been seven tularemia cases reported – this most recent case brings the total to eight.

The patient presented to the clinic with a four-day history of an abdominal abscess. A specimen was collected from the abscess site and tested positive for tularemia by PCR. The patient was treated with antibiotics and continued to improve with the outpatient treatment.

No apparent risk-factors to the patient were identified. The patient reported having no pets in the home or handling sick or dead animals. The case also did not recall any tick bites; however, it is possible the patient did not notice a tick bite due to the location of the abscess. Typically, ulceroglandular tularemia infections appear at the site of the organism's introduction into the body.

For more information about tularemia, visit the NDDOH website at www.ndhealth.gov/.

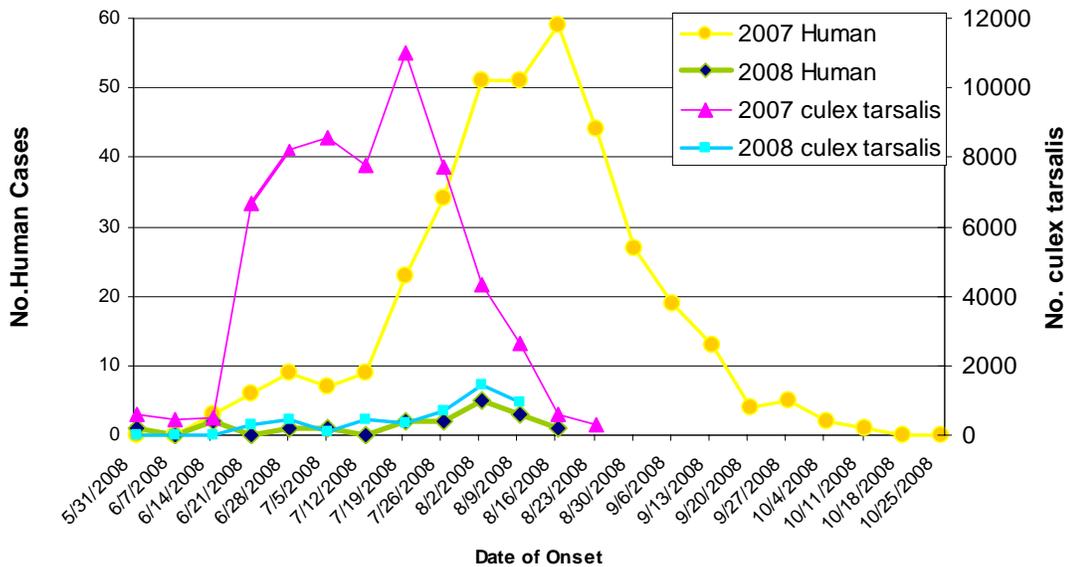


West Nile Virus (WNV) Update

As of August 19, 2008, eighteen human WNV infections have been reported to the state health department. In addition, one horse from Grand Forks County and two dogs from Walsh County tested positive for WNV.

In past years, the majority of human WNV cases originate during the month of August. Also during this time, *Culex tarsalis* mosquitoes typically reach their peak. The graph below shows 2007 mosquito and human data, along with the current 2008 data.

WNV Positive Human Cases and Female *Culex Tarsalis* Counts, North Dakota



For more information about WNV, visit the NDDOH website at www.ndhealth.gov/wnv.



Possible Foodborne Outbreak Associated With a Public Event

On Wed., June 25, 2008, the NDDoH received a report that approximately 25 people who attended a centennial event in McHenry county the weekend of June 20 to 22, 2008, had become ill. The NDDoH initiated an investigation and obtained a list of names and addresses of individuals who preregistered for the event. Four food vendors served meals and a meal was catered on June 21, 2008, during the centennial event.

An investigation conducted by the NDDoH identified that 32 (18%) centennial event attendees met the case definition of vomiting or diarrheal illness within two days following attendance of the centennial event. The most frequently reported signs and symptoms included diarrhea (97%) and cramps (85%). The ages ranged from 5 to 75 years (median 50 years). The incubation period ranged from 3.5 to 28 hours (median 12 hours). The duration of illness ranged from two to 87 hours (median 23 hours).

The lab results on the single stool specimen collected tested positive for norovirus. It is possible that this finding is not related to the outbreak, as one positive laboratory test on a single stool sample is insufficient evidence to confirm etiology of an outbreak. Only one person reported vomiting when asked about illness history and a low occurrence of vomiting is not consistent with norovirus outbreaks. Data analysis showed no significant association between illness and any food items served at the catered meal June 21, 2008, or any of the food vendors serving meals June 20 to 22, 2008. Data analysis also showed no significant association between other possible risk factors present at the centennial event, including

handling animals at the petting zoo. The particular food item or environmental source identified as the vehicle of transmission in this investigation remains unknown.



Meet the New Disease Control Epidemiologists!

Please help us welcome the new epidemiologists to the Division of Disease Control.

Name: Valerie McGee

Title: Field Epidemiologist

Health Unit: Bismarck Burleigh Public Health

Education Background: BSN

Past Experience: RN in OB clinic, dialysis, medical/surgical, and neonatal intensive care

Family/Hobbies: I've been married for nine years to Jamie. I have four children: Wyatt (6), Hayes (5), Whitney (3), and Sydney (2 months). We recently purchased a new home and land in the country and are landscaping and remodeling in our spare time.

Name: Abbi Pierce

Title: Immunization Surveillance Coordinator

Health Unit: NDDoH

Education Background: BAS in community health from the University of Minnesota Duluth and a MPH in epidemiology from the State University of New York- Buffalo

Past Experience: While in graduate school, I worked in a behavioral medicine lab mainly in pediatrics, and I worked for the New York State Health Department, helping in both the bioterrorism and epidemiology divisions.

Family/Hobbies: I am originally from Bemidji, Minn., which is where the majority of my family resides. I enjoy going home and spending time with my family and being out on the gorgeous Minnesota lakes. I have a pretty wide variety of hobbies, some outside and some inside, ranging from camping to cooking.

Name: Lacy Deanne Oyloe

Title: Field Epidemiologist

Health Unit: Upper Missouri District Health Unit

Education Background: B.S. in biology and a B.A. in Spanish from Dickinson State University

Past Experience: I worked at St. Josephs Hospital in Dickinson as a physical therapy technician and as a cardiac rehab technician. I also worked at Mercy Hospital in Williston as a radiology clerk.

Family/Hobbies: My favorite things to do are pretty much anything outdoors. I love camping and fishing or just sitting out on the boat. If I'm not outside, I'm inside playing Rock Band or watching UFC.

Name: Keith LoMurray

Title: Immunization Information System Sentinel Site Coordinator

Health Unit: Disease Control

Education Background: B.A. in sociology from the University of Northern Colorado

Past Experience: I've worked with the North Dakota Rural/Tribal Mentoring Partnership as an evaluator and with a homeless shelter as a community organizer.

Family/Hobbies: I spend my free time kayaking, rock climbing, and eating as much sushi as possible.

Name: Sarah Weninger

Title: Enteric Disease Surveillance Coordinator

Education Background: B.S. in biochemistry and molecular biology from North Dakota State University

Past Experience: Student intern for the NDDoH, Division of Disease Control for two-and-one half years.

Family/Hobbies: I was married to my husband, Eric, on June 7, 2008. We love to go camping, swimming and anything else outdoors. In the fall, I am also a judge for USAG and high school gymnastics on the weekends. Gymnastics and Atlanta Braves baseball are my favorite sports. I also enjoy reading and scrapbooking.

Name: Alice Musumba

Title: Epidemiologist II

Education Background: MPH

Past Experience: Pandemic influenza coordinator, EPR for six months; director of community health education program in Kenya for eight years; and while attending school, research assistant in environmental health sciences.

Family/Hobbies: Married to Tony for five years and have a 17 month old daughter, Theodora. Hobbies include reading, knitting and gardening.

Contributing authors of The Pump Handle include Michelle Feist, Julie Goplin, Tracy Miller, Sarah Weninger and Kirby Kruger. For questions, suggestions or inquiries, or to be removed from the mailing list, please contact Sarah Weninger of the Division of Disease Control at 701.328.2366 or by email at sweninger@nd.gov.

The pump handle picture in the title was obtained from the website www.ph.ucla.edu/epi/snow.html.



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