

# Communicable Diseases Surveillance

## Highlights

Communicable Diseases Surveillance consists of data from various sources. The National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS) is conducted under the auspices of the Communicable Diseases Network Australia New Zealand. The *CDI* Virology and Serology Laboratory Reporting Scheme (LabVISE) is a sentinel surveillance scheme. The Australian Sentinel Practice Research Network (ASPREN) is a general practitioner-based sentinel surveillance scheme. In this report, data from the NNDSS are referred to as 'notifications' or 'cases', whereas those from ASPREN are referred to as 'consultations' or 'encounters' while data from the LabVISE scheme are referred to as 'laboratory reports'.

### *Vaccine preventable diseases*

A total of 440 notifications for vaccine preventable diseases were received during this reporting period, the figure was lower than the same period in 1998 (498). A rise in the number of measles notifications occurred in this reporting period (37) when compared with the previous period (26) and the same period in 1998 (14). However, the number of year to date notifications was similar for this year (273) and the previous year (269). Of the total of 37 measles notifications 76% (28) were from Victoria. All notified cases were aged 0 to 28 years, and 81% (30) were in the 0-9 years age group. One case reportedly occurred in a person previously fully immunised against measles.

### *Meningococcal infection*

Notifications of meningococcal infection (62) were similar in this reporting period when compared with the previous period (58) and the same period in 1998 (62). Overall, the number of notifications for the year to date (462) was higher than for the previous year to date (362). Of the 62 notifications, 24 (39%) were reported from New South Wales and 23 (37%) were reported from Victoria (23). Preliminary data on serogroups was available for 31 cases (47%) of which 10 (32%) were serogroup B, 9 (29%) were serogroup C and 12 (39%) were classified as unknown or other. There was a predominance of males amongst the 43 cases for whom gender were recorded, with a male to female ratio of 1.4:1. The age of cases ranged from 0 to 85 years, with 38% (25) in the 0-4 years age group, 15% (10) in the 15-19 years age group, and 12% (8) in the 5-9 years age group. Three cases (5%) were older than 80 years.

### *Vectorborne disease*

Notifications of Ross River virus infection (66) increased when compared with the previous period (34) and the same period in 1998 (54). An even greater rise of 53% was seen in the number of notifications for the year to

date (4,116) when compared with the previous year to date (2,455). The greatest number of notifications (49) were received from Queensland. There was a predominance of females amongst the 65 cases for whom gender was recorded, with a male to female ratio of 1.2:1. The age of cases ranged from 12 to 95 years with a mean of 44 years (SD=17 years), a median of 43 years and a mode of 28 years.

Malaria notifications increased in this reporting period (47) when compared with the previous period (31) and the same period last year (25). Overall the number of notifications for the year to date (631) also increased when compared with the previous year to date (589). Of the 47 cases, 47% (22) were reported from the Northern Territory. It is possible that this rise may have been associated with the intake and screening of the East Timorese refugees. Cases were aged from 0 to 63 years with a mean of 13 years (SD=16 years), median of 23 years and a mode of 42 years. There was a predominance of males amongst the 40 cases for whom gender was specified, with a male to female ratio of 3:1. Data on the species were available for 43% (20) of cases, among these 20 cases: 60% (12) were *P. vivax*, 30% (6) were *P. falciparum*, 5% (1) was *P. ovale* and 5% (1) was classified as unknown or other.

### *Zoonoses*

Notifications of brucellosis jumped markedly in this period with 9 cases reported compared with 1 case in the previous period and 3 cases for the same period last year. Overall the number of notifications for the year to date remain similar for this year (36) as for the previous year (33). All notifications were reported from Queensland. Cases ranged from 20 to 53 years of age and all were male.

### *Sexually transmitted diseases*

The first notifications for 1999 of chancroid were received in this period. Two cases were reported in this period compared with none for the same period in the previous year.

These 2 cases were reported from Western Australia, were aged 15 to 19 years, and included 1 male and 1 female.

The number of chlamydial infection notifications for this period (960) was increased when compared with the previous period (688) and the same period in 1998 (852). Overall the year to date number of notifications have also increased markedly (10,962) when compared with the year to date for the previous year (8,535). Most notifications were received from Queensland. Cases were aged 0 to 64 years, and with 34% (324) of cases in the 20-24 years age group. Females predominated (60%) amongst cases with a male to female ratio of 1.5:1.

*Foodborne disease*

A marked increase in the number of notifications of listeriosis (14) occurred for this period compared with the previous period (3) and the same period for 1998 (2). Overall there was a slight increase in the number of year to date notifications (50) compared with the previous year to date figure (44). The increase in notifications may

represent the beginning of the recently reported listeriosis outbreak. Of the notifications, 50% (7) was reported from New South Wales, and 21% (3) from Western Australia. Cases were mostly aged from 17 to 65 years with a mean of 45 years (SD=18 years), median of 39 years and a mode of 32 years. Three cases were aged less than 1 year. Of those cases where gender has been reported there were 4 males and 8 females.

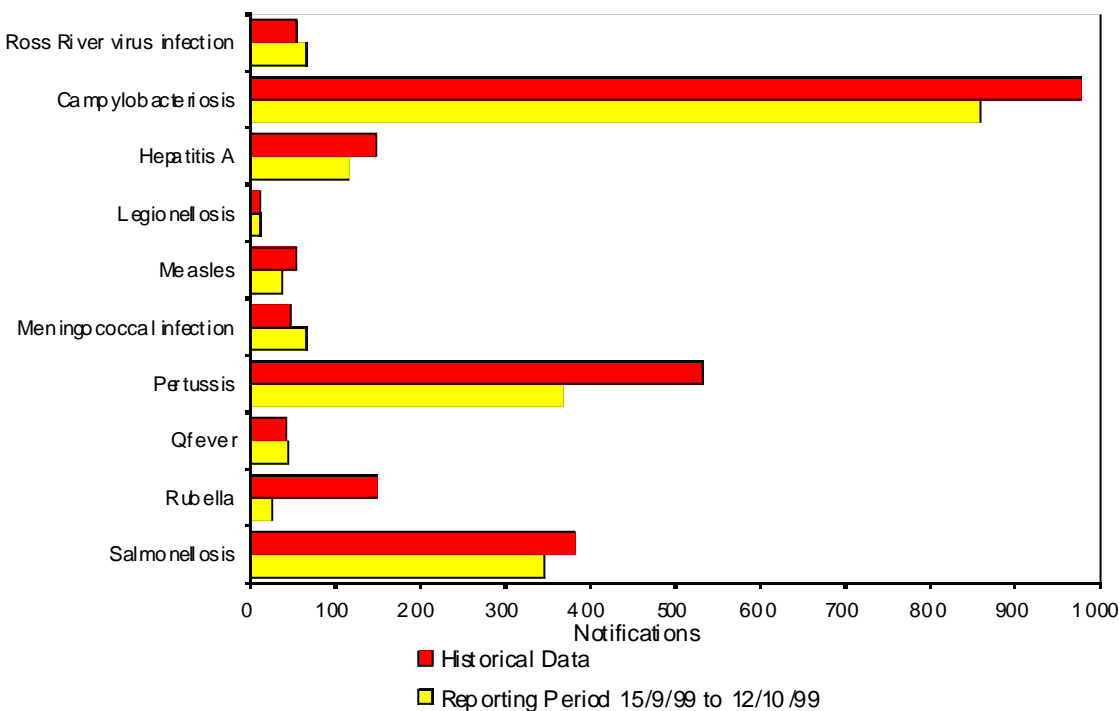
Tables

There were 5,374 notifications to the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS) in the four week period, 15 September to 12 October 1999 (Tables 1 and 2). The numbers of reports for selected diseases have been compared with historical data for corresponding periods in the previous three years (Figure 1).

There were 4,310 reports received by the *CDI*/Virology and Serology Laboratory Reporting Scheme (LabVISE) in the four week period, 9 September to 6 October 1999 (Tables 3 and 4).

The Australian Sentinel Practice Research Network (ASPREN) data for weeks 37 to 40, ending 10 October 1999, are included in this issue of *CDI* (Table 5).

**Figure 1. Selected National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System reports, and historical data<sup>1</sup>**



1. The historical data are the averages of the number of notifications in the corresponding 4 week periods of the last 3 years and the 2 week periods immediately preceding and following those.