

EPI Update for Friday, June 8, 2012
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **False-positive measles test demonstrates public health importance**
- **CDC recommends hepatitis C testing for all baby boomers**
- **WHO warns that gonorrhea is growing resistant to drugs**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

False-positive measles test demonstrates public health importance

In early February, the Maine's public health officials were notified of a suspected measles infection in an unvaccinated, 57-year-old woman. The patient presented with a three-day history of headache and fever and a two-day history of papular rash which began on her neck and spread to her abdomen, legs, and back. She later developed coryza and cough. Serum specimens demonstrated high titers of measles IgM and positive measles IgG at a reference laboratory.

During the disease investigation, the patient reported having measles as a child. In addition, she revealed having been exposed to her grandson who was infected with parvovirus one to two weeks before becoming ill. Serum and nasopharyngeal swabs were collected and submitted to the Maine public health laboratory for repeat testing. Both IgM and PCR results were negative for measles. Since some measles IgM tests yield false-positive results and after learning of the patient's parvovirus exposure, the health department requested parvovirus testing on the original serum specimen at the reference laboratory. This test yielded a high titer of parvovirus IgM and low titer of parvovirus IgG, consistent with recent infection.

This case, published in the *MMWR*, demonstrates the importance of thorough disease investigation, appropriate testing, and the role of public health laboratories in confirming or ruling out infectious diseases of public health concern. Maine's state public health laboratory was quickly able to rule out measles, preventing a costly public health response.

To read the full *MMWR* article, visit

www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6121a4.htm?s_cid=mm6121a4_e.

CDC recommends hepatitis C testing for all baby boomers

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is issuing draft recommendations that all U.S. baby boomers – those born between 1945 and 1965 – get a one-time test for the hepatitis C virus. CDC's draft recommendations will be available for a public comment period from May 22 – June 8, 2012. According to the CDC, one in 30 baby boomers has been infected with hepatitis C, and most do not know it. This adds up to over two million individuals and accounts for more than 75 percent of all American adults living with the virus.

More than 15,000 Americans, mostly baby boomers, die each year from hepatitis C-related illness. Deaths have been increasing steadily over a decade and are projected to grow significantly in the coming years. CDC estimates that the one-time hepatitis C testing of baby boomers could identify more than 800,000 additional people with the virus, allowing for treatment, preventing chronic liver diseases (such as cirrhosis and liver cancer) and saving more than 120,000 lives.

The State Hygienic Laboratory, Iowa's public health laboratory, offers hepatitis C IgG antibody testing.

To read the full CDC press release, visit

www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/newsroom/HepTestingRecsPressRelease2012.html.

WHO warns that gonorrhea is growing resistant to drugs

The World Health Organization (WHO) issued new guidance calling for greater vigilance on the correct use of antibiotics in the treatment for gonorrhea. According to WHO, millions of people with gonorrhea may be at risk of running out of treatment options as several countries around the world are reporting infections resistance to cephalosporin antibiotics, the primary treatment option against gonorrhea. Since the development of antibiotics, the pathogen has developed resistance to many of the common antibiotics used as treatment, including penicillin, tetracyclines, and quinolones. Worldwide, 106 million people are infected with gonorrhea each year.

To read the full WHO press release, visit

www.who.int/mediacentre/news/notes/2012/gonorrhoea_20120606/en/index.html

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

None

Have a healthy and happy week!

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