

## Meningococcal disease update

Sporadic cases of meningococcal disease continued to be reported across the country, with no noticeable seasonal increase of laboratory-confirmed cases reported to the Centre for Respiratory Diseases and Meningitis (CRDM), NICD-NHLS as yet. Numbers are expected to increase during June and July, and to peak during the months of August to October. There are inherent delays in laboratory-based reporting, which lags behind clinical reports of meningococcal disease.

By the end of epidemiological week 19 (week ending 12 May), a total of 46 laboratory-confirmed cases was reported to the CRDM, NICD-NHLS (Table). Eleven cases have been reported in the <1 year age group this year so far. This is slightly lower than the number of cases for the equivalent time period and age group in 2012 (n=16).

The reported cases were caused by diverse serogroups, which is in keeping with sporadic endemic disease in the country. Serogroup data were available for 25/46 (54%) of cases. Serogroup B and W135 have been identified most commonly this year (6/25, 24% serogroup B and 12/25, 48% serogroup W135). There were also four cases of serogroup Y and two cases of serogroup C disease. One isolate was non-groupable.

Meningococcal disease occurs throughout the year, but the incidence is highest in the late winter and early spring. Clinicians should have a high index of

suspicion for meningococcal disease in patients who present with nonspecific early signs and symptoms. Disease typically has a rapid progression and should be managed as a medical emergency in order to reduce morbidity and mortality. All cases of suspected meningococcal disease (meningitis and sepsis) should be notified telephonically to the Department of Health.

**Table. Number of laboratory-confirmed meningococcal disease cases reported until end of week 19, 2012 and 2013, by province**

Province	Year	
	2012	2013
Eastern Cape	8	9
Free State	0	3
Gauteng	22	10
KwaZulu-Natal	8	8
Limpopo	1	1
Mpumalanga	1	1
Northern Cape	0	1
North West	2	1
Western Cape	13	12
	55	46

**Source:** Centre for Respiratory Diseases and Meningitis, NICD-NHLS.