5 BEYOND OUR BORDERS

The 'Beyond our Borders' column focuses on selected and current international diseases that may affect South Africans travelling abroad. Numbers correspond to Figure 5 on page 9.

1. Anthrax: Zambia
Cases of animal and human anthrax have been reported in five districts in the Western Province. At least 40 animal deaths and 17 hospitalisations of persons who ate meat from affected cattle were reported in from Kalabo district in Western Province. Health authorities have intervened with massive animal vaccination campaigns, and quarantining of cattle in affected areas.

2. Plague: Madagascar
On 6 December 2016, the Ministry of Health in Madagascar alerted WHO of a suspected plague outbreak in Befotaka district, Atsimo Atsinanana region in the southeastern part of the country. The district is outside the area previously affected by plague, the Lakora district in Ihorombe Region. As of 27 December 2016, 62 cases (6 confirmed, 5 probable, 51 suspected) including 26 deaths have been reported.

3. Ebola: West Africa
No new cases have been reported from West Africa.

4. Typhoid: Zimbabwe
Since late October 2016, there has been an increase in cases of typhoid fever centred in Harare but apparently in many towns across Zimbabwe. Exact numbers of cases are unknown. MSF has set up a treatment centre in Harare, where at least 126 cases of typhoid have been confirmed since the start of the rainy season about 2 months ago.

5. H7N9: China
More than 125 cases (including 29 deaths) of human infection with avian influenza A (H7N9) have been reported primarily in Guangdong, Anhui, and Jiangsu provinces since November 2016 with sporadic cases in five other provinces. H7N9 is reported exclusively in the winter months and the November onset and unprecedented number of early season cases may herald an especially large outbreak.

6. Lassa Fever: Nigeria
On Friday, 23 December 2016, the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control stated that they had recorded the largest outbreaks of Lassa fever in its history between 2015 and 2016, with 273 reported cases resulting in 149 deaths. Cases have been recorded in 23 of the 36 states. As of 19 January, 4 deaths and 16 suspected cases have been reported from Nasarawa state, and 36 persons who had contact with cases are undergoing follow-up.

7. Yellow Fever: Angola and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
Angola declared the end of the yellow fever epidemic affecting the country on Friday, 23 December 2016, after a vaccination campaign reaching 25 million people.

8. Zika virus disease: Angola
See article on p3

9. Cholera: Tanzania
The Karema Division, located on the eastern shores of Lake Tanganyika has recorded 91 cases of cholera with three fatalities since the beginning of December. Adjacent Kenya has also issued a cholera health alert due to the porous borders between the two countries.

10. Legionellosis: United Arab Emirates:
More than 30 confirmed cases of legionellosis in returning travelers have been identified and reported from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. No common source has been identified as affected travelers have stayed in at least 25 different locations in Deira, Bur Dubai, Downtown, Meydan, and Marina Emirates living districts. Legionellosis should be considered in returning travelers from UAE who presenting with fever and pneumonia within 2 weeks of travel.

11. Yellow fever: Brazil
An outbreak of yellow fever is under investigation in the east-central state of Minas Gerais where 47 cases have been confirmed with 25 deaths. Over 160 suspected cases are known to authorities. In 2016, Brazil reported only 7 cases of yellow fever. Vaccination campaigns are underway. It is presently unclear if these cases represent sylvatic or urban cycle disease.

Source: Division of Public Health Surveillance and Response, NICD-NHLS, from Promed (www.promed.org)

Figure 5. Current outbreaks that may have implications for travellers. Number correspond to text on the previous page. The red dot (solid=cases; open=zero report/no cases) is the approximate location of the outbreak or event