2 ZOONOTIC and VECTOR-BORNE DISEASES

a Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever

Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF) has been confirmed in a 44 year old farmer from Van Wyksvlei, Northern Cape. The patient reported a "bontpoot" tick bite before falling ill in mid-October 2014. The patient was hospitalized shortly after starting to complain of fever and myalgia. Initial blood results revealed platelet depletion ($114X10^9$/ L) (18 October 2014) which further dropped to 92 $X10^9$/L (23 October 2014). Other findings included marginally raised liver transaminases and leukopenia. The diagnosis was confirmed by RT-PCR on two successive submission of blood to the National Institute for Communicable Diseases. The patient is reportedly doing well at the time of this report.

Nearly 200 cases of CCHF have been laboratory confirmed in South Africa since 1981. Although cases have been reported from all nine provinces, cases are mostly reported from the semi-arid region of South Africa including the Free State and Northern Cape Provinces. More than two thirds of cases reported an exposure to ticks, be it tick bites or squashing of ticks. Transmission of CCHF virus may also occur through direct contact with blood or tissues of infected animals. Livestock and other animals may also be infected with CCHF virus although the do not develop signs and symptoms related to the infection. Viraemia tends to be transient in animals but presents a window period for transmission through hunting and slaughtering practices.

The case reported here is the fourth case of CCHF confirmed in South Africa for 2014 to date. The other cases were reported from the Northern Cape (n=2) and Free State (n=1) Provinces. One of the three cases reported (not including the current case) had a fatal outcome.

Source: Division of Public Health Surveillance and Response and Centre for Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases, NICD-NHLS