



FOREWORD

In this issue the recent incidences of Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF) and tick-bite fever in South Africa are described. It is highly likely that infections in all cases were acquired from the bites of either *Hyalomma* or *Amblyomma* ticks. In general, human infection with CCHF virus is uncommon in South Africa, and incidences of both diseases are most closely associated with hunting and livestock farming.

Also in this issue is the GERMS-SA report for 2013. This report contains summaries of national surveillance data by disease including data collected from the enhanced surveillance sites that cover all nine of South Africa's provinces. The GERMS surveillance system is now in its 11th year and continues to monitor the impact of programmes, including the Expanded Programme on Immunisations and the Comprehensive Care, Management and Treatment Programme for HIV/AIDS, on the South African population. 2013 saw various changes to the GERMS surveillance platform. In particular, rifampicin-resistant TB surveillance was rolled out to four additional sites, identification of *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteraemic cases was limited to three Gauteng sites and electronic capture on mobile phones of enhanced surveillance case report forms by surveillance officers was initiated for cryptococcosis. Importantly, the total number of cases matching the GERMS definitions dropped from over 17,000 in 2012 to approximately 12,000 cases in 2013. Other notable surveillance indicators for 2013 include the decrease in cryptococcosis incidence nationally, the stabilizing of meningococcal disease incidence since 2012, the continued low prevalence of non-susceptibility of *Neisseria meningitidis* isolates to penicillin, reductions in the incidence of invasive *Haemophilus influenzae* and *Streptococcus pneumoniae* disease, and a significant decline in methicillin resistance amongst *Staphylococcus aureus* isolates.

All participating laboratories and contributors to these reports are thanked for their inputs, especially Vanessa Quan and Penny Crowther-Gibson who co-edited the GERMS-SA report.

Basil Brooke, Editor

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