



Meningococcal disease update

The meningococcal season is underway - cases of meningococcal disease are being reported from across the country with an overall increase in case numbers. Meningococcal disease case numbers are expected to peak during the months of August to October each year.

By epidemiological week 28 (week ending 14 July), a total of 99 laboratory-confirmed cases was reported to the Centre for Respiratory Diseases and Meningitis, NICD-NHLS (Table 1). Twenty-five cases have been reported in the <1 year old age group this year so far; this is similar to the number of cases for the equivalent time period and age group in 2012 (n=29).

The reported cases were caused by diverse serogroups, which is in keeping with sporadic endemic disease in the country. Serogroup data were available for 72/99 (73%) of cases. Serogroup B and W135 have been identified most commonly this year (20/54, 37% serogroup B and 34/54, 63% serogroup W135). There were also thirteen cases of serogroup Y and five cases of serogroup C disease; two isolates were non-groupable.

Clinicians should have a high index of suspicion for meningococcal disease in patients who present with

an acute febrile illness and 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 1. Number of laboratory-confirmed meningococcal disease cases reported until end of epidemiologic week 28 (mid-July)

Province	Year	
	2012	2013
Eastern Cape	14	25
Free State	0	7
Gauteng	42	18
KwaZulu-Natal	13	16
Limpopo	2	1
Mpumalanga	1	1
Northern Cape	0	1
North West	6	5
Western Cape	27	25
	105	99

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