IN BELGIUM

Increase of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD): update

The number of cases of *Chlamydia trachomatis* registered by the sentinel laboratory network continues to increase in Belgium: as of January 6, 2003, 250 cases have been reported in the fourth trimester of 2002 compared to 198 cases and 204 cases in the same period of 2001 and 2000 respectively. Data are still incomplete for December 2002.

In 2001, a rise of *C. trachomatis* cases was already reported in the Antwerpen arrondissement but no significant increase was observed at national level. The current rise at national level is particularly noticeable from May 2002 onwards (figure 1). Further analysis is required to identify the most affected areas and age groups.

The number of *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* cases reported by sentinel laboratories remains stable since its increase in mid-2001 (figure 1). As of January 6, 2003, 66 cases have been reported in the fourth trimester of 2002 compared to 65 in the same period of 2001.

Figure 1: *C. trachomatis* and *N. gonorrhoeae* reported per month
Belgium, 2000-2002. Data from sentinel laboratories, IPH

Source: IPH Laboratory Network. Reference laboratory for *N. gonorrhoeae*: Dr. M. van Esbroeck, Tropical Institute of Antwerp. Follow up in the IPH: Dr. A. Sasse and Dr. G. Hanquet.
**Parainfluenza**

The number of parainfluenza cases reported by the sentinel laboratory network doubled during the month of November 2002 (N=25) compared to October 2002 (N=11). This increase is noticed in the 3 regions of Belgium. Data on the month of December 2002 are awaited to conduct further analysis. Earlier in the year, in May-June 2002, a seasonal peak has been observed with a monthly number of cases around 50. Similar seasonal peaks have been observed in previous years as well. Source: IPH Laboratory Network.

**IN EUROPE**

**Resistant Staphylococcus aureus death in Scotland**

Laboratory tests have confirmed that a patient who died last week in a Scottish hospital, was infected with a Glycopeptide Intermediate Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (GISA). GISA has increased resistance to first line antibiotics used for treating infections caused by methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA). This is the second report of an infection with this organism for Scotland, and possibly the first report in the United Kingdom of an associated death. Source: [http://www.eurosurveillance.org/](http://www.eurosurveillance.org/) update 2002 issue 49.

**IN THE REST OF THE WORLD**

**Norovirus infections**

In Minnesota USA, state health officials said an unprecedented 25 outbreaks of illness afflicting as many as 1000 people have been attributed to norovirus (Norwalk virus) infection since 1 Nov 2002. The illness causes intense vomiting, cramps and diarrhoea usually for one or 2 days. Source: Promed [http://www.promedmail.org/](http://www.promedmail.org/)

In Belgium, the IPH Laboratory Network has included Norwalk-like virus infections to its surveillance. Sentinel laboratories are invited to send stool samples of suspected cases to the reference laboratory in the ULg University (Dr. Scipioni, Virology). Follow-up in the IPH: Dr. G. Marchant and G. Ducoffre.

**Acute respiratory syndrome in Democratic Republic of the Congo**

In November 2002, an Influenza-like illness was reported in Djolu, Bosobolo, Karawa and Genema health areas in Equateur Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo, with Bosobolo being the most affected area. Over 4,000 cases of acute respiratory illness, including approximately 500 deaths, have been reported between October and November 22. A retrospective survey is being conducted by Epicentre and MSF-France in Bosobolo covering approximately 300 households. A total of 1,245 cases including 18 deaths (1.4% of cases) was recorded. The attack rate was 47%. All age groups have been affected and the highest mortality (over 3%) has been observed in children under 5 years of age and the elderly. Source: WHO [http://www.who.int/disease-outbreak-news/n2002/index.html](http://www.who.int/disease-outbreak-news/n2002/index.html)