

West Nile Incidence on the Rise, CDC Reports

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California reported one-third of the 2005 U.S. total of West Nile virus cases through December 1 and 25% of the cases of the viral neuroinvasive disease, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported.

A total of 2,744 human cases of West Nile virus (WNV) disease were reported in 42 states in 2005, compared with 2,359 in 2004. There was a spread of the disease in both humans and animals into counties not previously affected, as well as recurrence where the disease had previously been reported. "The increase ... suggests that endemic transmission of WNV in the United States will continue for the foreseeable future," the CDC said (MMWR 2005;54:1253-6).

WNV infections in humans, birds, mosquitoes, and nonhuman mammals are reported to the CDC through ArboNET, an Internet-based arbovirus surveillance system managed by state health departments and the CDC.

Of the cases reported, 1,165 (43%) were WNV neuroinvasive disease (WNND), which includes meningitis, encephalitis, or acute flaccid paralysis; 1,434 (52%) were

West Nile fever (WNF); and 145 (5%) were unspecified illnesses.

WNND had its highest incidence in the central United States, including South Dakota, Nebraska, and North Dakota, but there were also focal outbreaks in Illinois, Texas, and Louisiana.

"Nationally, reports of WNV disease began in late May, peaked during the third week in August, and lasted into November," the CDC said.

The median age of WNND patients

was 57 years (range 3 months to 98 years); 85% of the 1,165 patients were hospitalized and 7% died. The median age of those with WNND who died was 75 years (range 36-98 years).

The median age of patients with WNF was 48 years (range 1-92 years); 23% of the 1,434 patients were hospitalized and 0.3% died. The median age of the four who died was 89 years (range 44-92 years).

"Approximately 80% of all WNV infections are asymptomatic, approximately

20% cause WNF, and less than 1% cause WNND. The large percentage of WNND among reported cases reflects underreporting of WNF and lack of reporting of asymptomatic infections," the CDC said.

"A total of 11,263 mosquito pools from 410 counties in 43 states and the District of Columbia tested positive for WNV." Of these, 64% were made up of *Culex* mosquitoes, and "control of *Culex* mosquitoes remains critical to reducing risk for human WNV disease," the CDC said. ■

Oral Nystatin Cuts Neonatal Candida Risk

ST. LOUIS — A medical practice intervention reduced the incidence of *Candida* species from 36% among 45 control neonates admitted between Jan. 1, 1995, and June 30, 1996, to 6% among 69 neonates admitted between July 1, 1996, and December 31, 1998, said Dr. Maliha J. Shareef in a poster presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Society for Pediatric Research.

The intervention included administration of oral nystatin every 6 hours for the first week of life, and as an accompaniment to each antibiotic course during the first 4 weeks, wrote Dr. Shareef of St. Francis Medical Center, Peoria, Ill. Modification of parameters for early extubation, early discontinuation of central lines, and use of parenteral nutrition and antibiotics also were part of the intervention.

The study included neonates weighing 750 g or less at birth, who were admitted to a neonatal ICU within the first week of life.

A retrospective analysis revealed that the intervention group experienced significantly fewer episodes of *Candida* after controlling for gestational age, model of delivery, and number of days of central vascular access. However, exposure to a high humidity environment was significantly associated with an increased risk of *Candida* sepsis within the intervention group (odds ratio 10.5).

Overall infection rates remained in the 0%-3% range during 1999-2004.

—Heidi Splete

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