

Overseas briefs

Source: World Health Organization (WHO)

Cholera

Rwanda. A total of 106 cases and 10 deaths have been reported since 16 November in Runda transit camp, 20 km from Kigali. WHO is supporting the Ministry of Health in follow up and close monitoring of diarrhoeal diseases at commune level, particularly among recent returnees.

Zaire. A total of 1,133 cases and 23 deaths have occurred in Goma Hospital since 16 November and the local WHO epidemiologist reports that the number of cases has now stabilised.

E.coli O157 infection, Scotland

Between 22 November and 11 December 1996, 396 suspected cases of *E.coli* O157 infection were reported to the Scottish Centre for Infection and Environmental Health. A total of 216 cases have been confirmed, with 11 deaths in adults. The source of the outbreak has been attributed to consumption of meat products.

Ebola haemorrhagic fever, Gabon

Fifty-two cases of Ebola haemorrhagic fever have been detected through active surveillance and contact tracing in the outbreak which was declared on 10 October. Forty cases have died. The last death occurred in a hospital in the capital Libreville on 30 December 1996. This death was of the last identified case, which had an onset of illness on 21 December. On 2 January 1997, three cases were still in hospital in Booué. Surveillance and monitoring of contacts included 92 persons in Booué and 93 in Libreville.

Influenza, global situation at 3 January 1997

By mid-December influenza had reached epidemic levels in France, in parts of Spain (Madrid region and central-northern regions), the western and south-western parts of Switzerland and in the far eastern region of Russia. Marked increases had been reported in England. In the rest of Europe, influenza had not yet made much more than sporadic appearances. In North America, increases had been registered in all regions of the United States of America and there had been a marked increase in the number of laboratory confirmed cases in Canada. Local outbreaks had been recorded in Japan.

The laboratory confirmed cases during the first three months of the 1996-1997 influenza season were mostly influenza A. Almost all those further subtyped were of H₃N₂ subtype and appear to be close the strain recommended for inclusion in the influenza vaccine. Influenza A has been confirmed in Canada, French Guiana, Guadeloupe and USA in the Americas; Belgium, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom in Europe; in Hong Kong, and Japan in Asia; Israel in the Middle East; and in New Zealand and Madagascar. Influenza B has been much less common but sporadic isolates have been reported in Australia, Canada, Chile, Hong Kong, Iceland, Latvia, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. Influenza A (H₁N₁) has been reported from Canada and the Russian Federation.

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Contributions covering any aspects of communicable disease are invited. Instructions to authors can be found in *CDI* 1997;21:9.

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