

ASPREN definitions 2001

The Research and Health Promotion Unit of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners operates the Australian Sentinel Practice Research Network (ASPREN). ASPREN is a national network of general practitioners who report on a number of conditions each week. The aim of ASPREN is to provide an indicator of the burden of disease in the primary health care setting and to detect trends in consultation rates.

The list of conditions is reviewed annually by the ASPREN management committee, and an annual report is published.

For 2001, 12 conditions are being monitored, four of which are reported in *Communicable Diseases Intelligence (CDI)*.

These include first attendance for an episode of influenza, influenza with culture, chickenpox and shingles.

The other recordable conditions are: chlamydia genital infection – requested by patient; chlamydia genital infection – suspected by doctor; depression; domestic violence; health care plan completed – no change of management; health care plan completed – change of management; antibiotic prescription for URTI; and patient request for antibiotics for URTI.

Data for communicable diseases are published every quarter in *CDI*. For each of the reporting weeks reviewed, the number of cases is presented in tabular form together with the rate of reporting per 1,000 consultations. Brief comments on the reports are included in the surveillance highlights section if appropriate. The case definitions are as follows:

Influenza

- (a) Viral culture or serological evidence of influenza virus infection; or
- (b) influenza epidemic, plus four of the criteria in (c); or

(c) six of the following:

- sudden onset (within 12 hours);
- cough;
- rigours or chills;
- fever;
- prostration and weakness;
- myalgia, widespread aches and pains;
- no significant respiratory physical signs other than redness of nasal mucous membrane and throat;
- influenza in close contacts.

Influenza with culture

Defined as above with viral cultures or serological ordered.

Chickenpox

An acute, generalised viral disease with a sudden onset of slight fever, mild constitutional symptoms and a skin eruption which is maculopapular for a few hours, vesicular for 3-4 days, and leaves a granular scab.

Shingles

Recurrence, recrudescence or reactivation of chicken pox infection. Vesicles with an erythematous base restricted to skin areas supplied by sensory nerves of a single or associated group of dorsal root ganglia. Lesions may appear in crops in irregular fashion along nerve pathways, are usually unilateral, deeper seated and more closely aggregated than those of chickenpox.

Any questions concerning interpretation may be directed to:

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Details of the current quarterly ASPREN report are available in this issue (p175).