

SITUATION UPDATE ON LISTERIOSIS OUTBREAK, SOUTH AFRICA

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Summary

- The source of the outbreak has been identified as ready-to-eat processed meat products manufactured at Enterprise Foods' Polokwane production facility
- The recall of implicated food products was announced on 04 March 2018. However, it is expected that new outbreak-related cases will continue to be reported, for the following reasons:
 - the incubation period of listeriosis can be up to 70 days
 - the implicated food products have a long refrigeration shelf life, and it is possible that despite the recall some products were not removed from retail/home settings, and consumption might occur
 - the possibility of cross-contamination of other types of foods in the retail or home setting may result in additional cases
- A total of 23 laboratory-confirmed cases are reported since the recall on 04 March 2018. Of these 23 cases, 17 persons have been interviewed; ten consumed implicated food products and two had direct contact with recalled food products. All exposures occurred prior to the recall.
- Outcome data is now available for 70% (687/982) of cases, of which 28% (189/687) died.

As of 26 March 2018, a total of 982 laboratory-confirmed listeriosis cases have been reported to NICD since 01 January 2017 (Figure 1). Most cases have been reported from Gauteng Province (59%, 576/982) followed by Western Cape (12%, 121/982) and KwaZulu-Natal (7%, 71/982) provinces. Cases have been diagnosed in both public (65%, 634/982) and private (35%, 348/982) healthcare sectors. *Listeria monocytogenes* was most commonly isolated/detected on blood culture (72%, 711/982), followed by CSF (21%, 207/982). Where age was reported (n=943), ages range from birth to 93 years (median 22 years) and 41% (404/982) are neonates aged ≤28 days (Figure 2). Of neonatal cases, 96% (389/404) had early-onset disease (birth to ≤6 days). Females account for 56% (531/950) of cases where gender is reported. Final outcome data is available for 70% (687/982) of cases, of which 28% (189/687) died.

- All healthcare workers are requested to complete case investigation forms (CIFs – available on the website) for case-patients with listeriosis, and submit these to the NICD (outbreak@nicd.ac.za).
- Clinical listeriosis management guidelines are available on the website (www.nicd.ac.za).
- Where clinicians suspect listeriosis but specimens (including CSF and blood) are culture negative, a polymerase chain reaction (PCR)-based test can be performed at the NICD. PCR can also be performed on placenta samples for investigation of stillbirths/miscarriages. Please contact the Centre for Enteric Diseases on (011) 555 0343 for further details
- The NICD continues to operate its 24-hour hotline for healthcare workers.

Note:

- Case data is the best available at time of publication
- Due to the inherent lag in laboratory reporting, case numbers are likely to change and trends must be interpreted with caution.

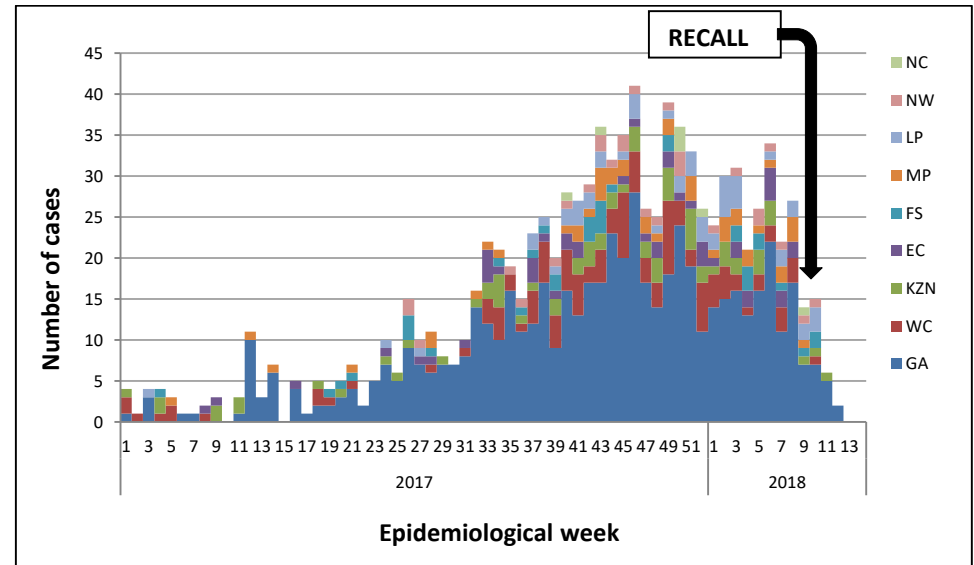


Figure 1: Epidemic curve of laboratory-confirmed listeriosis cases by epidemiological week and date of sample collection and province, South Africa, 01 January 2017 to 26 March 2018 (n=982)

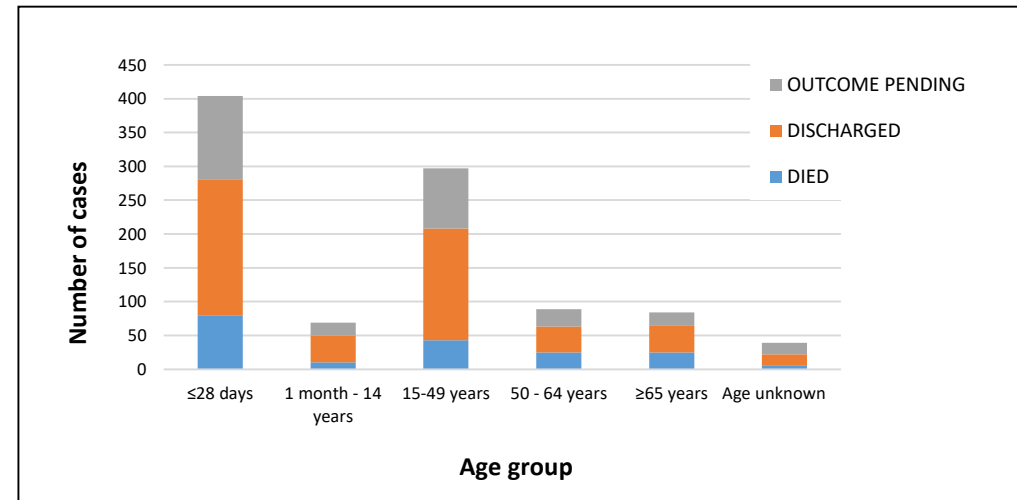


Figure 2: Age distribution and outcome of laboratory-confirmed listeriosis cases, South Africa, 01 January 2017 to 26 March 2018 (n=982)