

# Communicable Diseases Surveillance

## Highlights

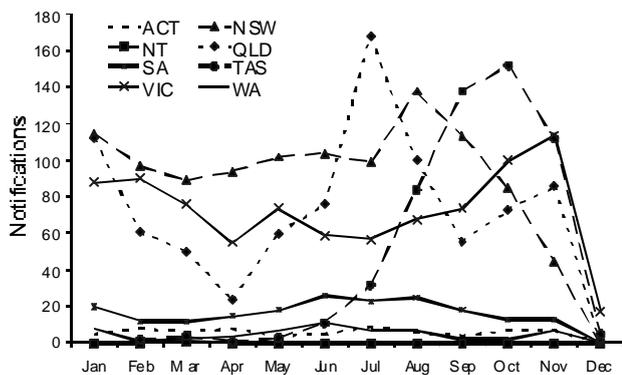
Communicable Diseases Surveillance consists of data from various sources. The National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS) is conducted under the auspices of the Communicable Diseases Network Australia New Zealand. The *CDI* Virology and Serology Laboratory Reporting Scheme (LabVISE) is a sentinel surveillance scheme. The Australian Sentinel Practice Research Network (ASPREN) is a general practitioner-based sentinel surveillance scheme. In this report, data from the NNDSS are referred to as 'notifications' or 'cases', whereas those from ASPREN are referred to as 'consultations' or 'encounters' while data from the LabVISE scheme are referred to as 'laboratory reports'.

### Vaccine preventable diseases

A total of 516 notifications were received in this reporting period; an increase on the previous reporting period (466) and the same period in 1998 (479). The number of measles notifications continued to decrease in this period (12) compared with the previous period (18). There was also a decrease in the overall year to date notifications of measles for 1999 (233) compared with 1998 (298). The number of Hib notifications remained fairly stable in this reporting period (3) compared with the previous period (6).

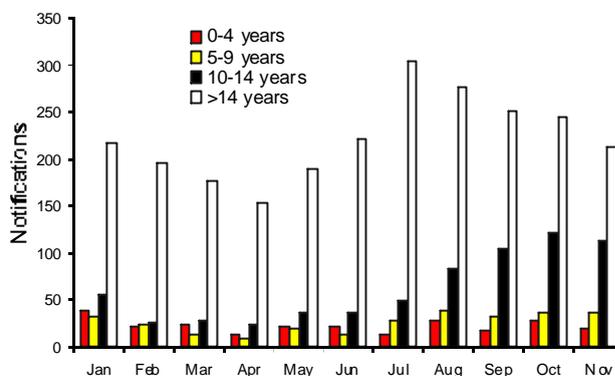
The number of pertussis notifications was higher in this period (469) compared with the previous period (432). An increase in the number of notified cases occurred in New South Wales (88), Victoria (178) and Western Australia (12). Overall, the year to date number of notifications remained lower for 1999 (4,005) than 1998 (6,153). Over the course of the year, the first peak in pertussis notifications was seen in the Australian Capital Territory in mid June, then New South Wales, Tasmania, Victoria and

**Figure 1. Notifications of pertussis, by State/Territory, and month of onset, 1999**



Queensland (Figure 1). Notified cases of pertussis occurred primarily in those aged 10-14 years and older, and increases in the numbers of notified cases also occurred in the same age groups (Figure 2). For the last reporting period 84% of cases were in these age groups and for the year to date 85% of cases were in these age groups. The ratio of males to females was 1:1.4 where gender was reported for both the reported period and the year to date.

**Figure 2. Notifications of pertussis, by age group and month of onset**



### Meningococcal infection

The number of meningococcal infection notifications remained steady in this reporting period (33) compared to the previous period (33). Overall, there was a decrease in the number of notifications from Victoria (11) and New South Wales (7). As previously noted, the overall year to date notifications (524) remained higher than for the year to date in 1998 (425). Notifications were highest in the 15-19 years (9; 27%) and 0-4 years (7; 21%) age groups. For the 22 cases for whom gender was reported, the male to female ratio was 1.8:1.

### Vectorborne diseases

There were 91 notifications of Ross River virus received for this period, an increase from the previous reporting period (72) but less than for the same period in 1998 (237). An increase in case notifications from Victoria (8) and Western Australia (39) contributed to the increase in this period. In total 4,273 notifications have been received for the year to date, an increase of 55% compared to 1998 (2,771). This overall increase was due to a peak in May.

A total of 7 dengue notifications were received in this reporting period, an increase from the previous reporting period (1) but a 10-fold reduction from the same period last year (70). Overall the total number of notifications for the

year to date (176) was reduced from the previous year (502) which included an outbreak in the first half of 1998.

### *Zoonoses*

There were 22 notifications of leptospirosis received in this reporting period, an increase of about 50% from the previous reporting period (12) and identical to the same period in 1998 (22). The year to date figures (323) were 80% higher than the previous year (180) and were markedly higher than any previous year. This increase was mostly associated with an increase in case notifications from Queensland in the first 6 months of the year. The peak number of notifications occurred in the 20-24 year age group.

Notifications of ornithosis increased in this reporting period (8) compared with the last reporting period (4). All 8 cases were from Victoria and the age range was from 21-69 years. Overall the total number of notifications of ornithosis for the year to date in 1999 (78) was 59% higher than the year to date notifications in 1998 (49).

### *Foodborne diseases*

There were 11 cases of infections with Shiga-like toxin (verotoxin) producing *E. coli* (SLTEC/VEC) reported in this period; an increase from the previous reporting period (3). All these cases were reported from South Australia. Overall notifications for the year to date have increased in 1999 (34) from 1998 (9).

Three cases of haemolytic uraemic syndrome (HUS) have been reported in this period; an increase compared to one case in the previous reporting period. One case was reported from South Australia and 2 cases from Victoria. Overall the number of year to date notifications were similar for 1999 (16) and 1998 (13).

**Please note:** The reported outbreak of *Haemophilus influenzae* type b in June, referred to in the last issue of *CDI*; 23(12)328, was due to a reporting artifact and not in fact an outbreak. *CDI* was subsequently informed that the 12 cases reported had onset dates in previous years, but were reported in June 1999.