

Possible foodborne outbreak

During September the New South Wales Health Department received notification of 87 cases of gastrointestinal illness following a luncheon in Sydney.

The illness was characterised by abdominal cramps and diarrhoea that lasted around 18 hours. Investigations are continuing into the source of the outbreak. Whilst it appears that the

illness was self-limiting all attendees have been advised to observe good hygiene practices.

Notices to readers

The Public Health Laboratory Network

As part of the implementation of the National Communicable Diseases Surveillance Strategy, the Public Health Laboratory Network (PHLN) has been established. The PHLN is a collaborative group of laboratories with expertise in public health microbiology. It will work in tandem with the Communicable Diseases Network Australia New Zealand.

The aim of the PHLN is to provide strategic advice, define priorities and share expertise at the national level in order to enhance the national capacity for the laboratory based surveillance of communicable diseases in Australia. Laboratories have been nominated by State and Territory health departments. Members of the PHLN are required to consult widely with others in their jurisdiction.

The inaugural meeting of the PHLN was held in June 1997. The network now meets by teleconference at 4-weekly intervals. Matters which the PHLN are currently considering include the funding of tests of public health importance, current infrastructure and turnaround times for tests of public health importance.

The PHLN is a network for all microbiologists involved in public health. Should you wish to bring a

matter to the attention of the PHLN please contact one of the members listed below.

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