

# A report from the Communicable Diseases Network Australia, 1 July to 30 September 2005

*The Communicable Diseases Network Australia (CDNA) consists of communicable disease authorities from various Australian Government agencies and state and territory health authorities, in addition to expert bodies and individuals in the specific areas of communicable disease epidemiology, clinical management, disease control and laboratory diagnosis. The CDNA provides national public health leadership and co-ordination on communicable disease surveillance, prevention and control, and offers strategic advice to governments and other key bodies on public health actions to minimise the impact of communicable diseases in Australia and the region.*

## **Refugee health**

CDNA endorsed the *Recommendations for refugee pre-departure assessment/treatment for malaria* which were developed by the International Organisation for Migration based on advice provided by the Australasian Society for Infectious Diseases.

## **Salmonella control in chicken meat and eggs**

CDNA agreed the control of *Salmonella* is an important public health issue, with control of *Salmonella* in eggs and chicken meat a possible means of controlling *Salmonella* in humans. CDNA requested that OzFoodNet collate and summarise available data on *Salmonella* prevalence in both eggs and chicken meat. The Network considered a presentation from OzFoodNet at a face-to-face meeting held in Melbourne and noted Food Standards Australia and New Zealand is currently developing a proposal for primary production processing standards, a risk assessment and a cost benefit analysis. CDNA agreed to initiate dialogue between industry representatives, state and territory health authorities, Animal Health Australia and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

## **Viral haemorrhagic fever**

The *Laboratory precautions for samples collected from patients with a suspected viral haemorrhagic fever* has been revised and updated by the Public Health Laboratory Network and was endorsed by CDNA. This paper consists of two parts. Only Part A, *Guidelines for laboratories that are not associated with a designated isolation hospital* was amended. Part B remains unchanged.

## **Shigella notifications to the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System**

In response to the increasing number of cases being reported, CDNA requested OzFoodNet provide information on *Shigella* notifications in Australia, in particular subtypes and Indigenous status of notified cases. At the face-to-face meeting held in Melbourne, CDNA considered a paper from OzFoodNet and noted some problems exist with the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS) data as states and territories are not coding in a consistent manner when entering notifications data in NNDSS.

### **Guidelines for the public health management of trachoma in Australia**

At the September meeting in Melbourne CDNA endorsed the Guidelines, which had been developed by the CDNA Trachoma Steering Group, as a minimum standard. It was agreed antibiotic resistance surveillance is required, however a mechanism to measure resistance is yet to be determined.

### **Face-to-face meeting**

In September the full CDNA met in Melbourne, along with the CDNA Jurisdictional Executive Group. Further details of the meetings will be reported to *CDI* as outcomes are achieved. In addition to the items previously mentioned, the major items discussed at these meetings were:

- review of the structure of CDNA and its sub committees and working groups;
- CDNA's 2005–06 workplan;
- a review of the meningococcal B vaccination programs in New Zealand;

- development of CDNA working procedures which will result in protocols for all aspects of the CDNA and its subcommittees (including appointment of the CDNA chair and making diseases nationally notifiable);
- nucleic acid detection tests for *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*;
- pandemic influenza planning;
- interpandemic influenza guidelines; and
- reports from the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance of Vaccine Preventable Diseases and the CDNA sub-committees and working groups.

In addition, representatives from the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs travelled from Canberra to Melbourne to meet with the CDNA Jurisdictional Executive Group. Health policy, the DIMIA Humanitarian Program policy, humanitarian settlement and special health projects in relation to refugees being resettled in Australia were major discussion points.