

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Monthly Report

ISSN 1361-1887

WEEKS 37-40/08

VOL 17 NO 10

NORTHERN IRELAND EDITION

www.cdscni.org.uk

November 2008

World AIDS Day on 1 December once again represents the ideal time to review the epidemiology of HIV in Northern Ireland and to highlight the need to both reinforce the safer sex message and to provide a range of services for those affected. As in previous recent years we would signpost readers to the publication of our annual HIV and STI Surveillance report.

While the number of new first-UK diagnoses of HIV in Northern Ireland for 2007 is similar to recent years, provisional data for the first six months of 2008 suggests a further increase in the annual figure for 2008 is likely. Once again the majority of infections are acquired through sex between men and women and sex between men.

Finally, we include a summary of key points from the HPA report Shooting Up: Infections among injecting drug users in the UK. This report provides important estimates of blood borne virus prevalence in the Northern Ireland injecting drug user population. Once again, the need for a range of preventive and treatment services is emphasised.

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World Aids Day 2008

1 December 2008 will be the 20th anniversary of the first World AIDS Day. According to reports received by CDSC(NI) in Northern Ireland during 2007:

- 65 first-UK diagnoses of HIV infection were made, an increase of 16% on 2006 figures
- New diagnoses of genital warts decreased by 11%
- New episodes of uncomplicated chlamydia decreased by 12%
- First episodes of genital herpes rose by 1%
- New diagnoses of uncomplicated gonorrhoea fell by 12%
- New episodes of infectious syphilis decreased by 27%

The report *HIV and STI Surveillance in Northern Ireland: 2008* is available at:

<http://www.cdscni.org.uk/publications/AnnualReports/pdf/HIVSTIinNorthernIreland2008.pdf>

Shooting up 2007

The most recent edition of the HPA report into infections among injecting drug users (IDUs) in the UK was published at the end of October. This is based on data from the Unlinked Anonymous Prevalence Monitoring Programme (IDUs in contact with drug treatment services). Data combined for 2006 and 2007 for Northern Ireland shows:

- 29% had antibodies to Hepatitis C
- 6.4% had anti-core antibodies to Hepatitis B
- 1.9% had antibodies to HIV
- 21% of current injectors reported sharing equipment in past 4 weeks. This figure was lower than that reported in England but higher than Wales
- 79% reported having had at least one dose of Hepatitis B vaccine

The report can be accessed at:

http://www.hpa.org.uk/webw/HPAweb&HPAwebStandard/HPAweb_C/1224833091685?p=1158945066450

Foodborne and gastrointestinal outbreaks: July - September 2008

Outbreak surveillance is primarily based on reports received from Consultants in Communicable Disease Control (CCDCs). Viral or suspect viral infections were thought to be the cause of the majority of the outbreaks of gastro-enteritis reported to CDSC (NI) during the third quarter of 2008. One outbreak in a hotel was considered to be foodborne, however, an organism was not identified.

Seven non-foodborne outbreaks of gastrointestinal illness were reported to CDSC (NI) affecting at least 72 people. Two outbreaks occurred in hospitals and five occurred in nursing/residential homes.

*In norovirus outbreaks once the causative organism is identified it is not normal practice for all other symptomatic individuals to be tested. Therefore, in norovirus outbreaks the number of symptomatic individuals is considerably in excess of the number of laboratory confirmed cases.

Table 1: General outbreaks of foodborne and other gastrointestinal illness reported to CDSC (NI), July - September 2008

Foodborne outbreaks					
HSSB	Location	Organism	Suspect vehicle	No. ill	No +ve
S	Hotel	Nil Identified	n/a	20	n/a
Other gastrointestinal outbreaks					
HSSB	No of outbreaks reported	Location	Organism*	No ill	No +ve
N	1	Residential Institution	Norovirus	4	3
	1	Residential Institution	Nil Identified	22	n/a
W	2	Hospital	Norovirus	31	7
	2	Residential Institution	Norovirus	11	2
	1	Residential Institution	C. Difficile	4	n/a

CoSurv laboratory update

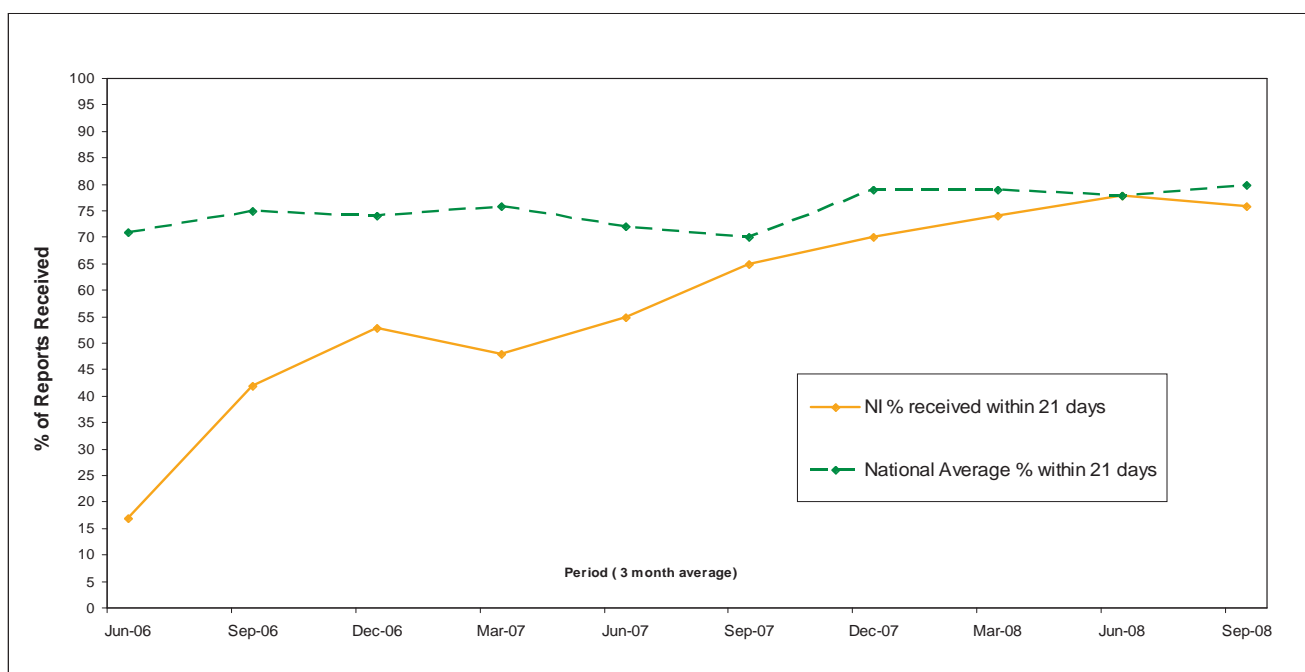
The main microbiology laboratories in Northern Ireland use the CoSurv laboratory module Labmod to electronically report details of isolates to CDSC (NI). In December 2007 CoSurv was installed in the Regional Virus Laboratory which now reports over 94% of records using the software. In Northern Ireland electronic reporting accounts for 97% of the total reported activity at September 2008 compared with 69% in September 2007.

The focus has now turned to the timeliness of reporting and the HPA target to receive 90% of reports within 21 days of specimen date.

Timeliness of reporting in Northern Ireland has improved towards the national picture, from 42% in September 2006 to 76% in September 2008 (Figure 1).

This increase can be attributed to the introduction of CoSurv to all main reporting laboratories together with more frequent reporting by those laboratories, with most laboratories now reporting on a weekly basis.

Figure 1: Reporting timeliness CDSC (NI), percentage of lab reports received at HPA Colindale based on specimen date



Foodborne and gastrointestinal tract infections: Laboratory reports, weeks 37-40

	Number of Reports received		Cumulative total	
	08/37-40	07/37-40	08/01-40	07/01-40
<i>Campylobacter</i>	77	83	687	718
<i>C. difficile</i> Toxin	106	121	1279	979
<i>C. perfringens</i>	0	3	24	14
<i>E. coli</i> O 157	6	6	52	39
<i>Salmonella</i> total	17	22	128	133
<i>S. enteritidis</i> (PT 4)	7 (1)	7 (1)	46 (7)	42 (2)
<i>S. typhimurium</i> (DT 104)	3 (1)	7 (0)	25 (4)	30 (0)
<i>Salmonella</i> other	7	8	57	61
<i>Shigella</i>	1	1	8	12
	13	3	91	77
<i>Cryptosporidium</i>	1	0	3	3
<i>Giardia</i>				
Adenovirus (faeces)	8	13	235	89
Enterovirus (faeces)	2	1	27	25
Rotavirus	4	2	667	357
Norovirus	12	12	349	274

Salmonella (other than *enteritidis* or *typhimurium*):

<i>S. sp</i>	1
<i>S. unnamed</i>	6

Comment:

With the exception of *Campylobacter*, *Salmonella* and *Shigella*, cumulative reports of all foodborne and gastrointestinal tract infections to week 40 have shown an increase compared with the same period last year.

Table 2: Infection associated with foreign travel, weeks 37-40, 2008, Northern Ireland

Organism	Countries visited
<i>Campylobacter</i> (8)	Cyprus (1), Italy (2), Rol (1), Spain (2), Turkey (2)
<i>Cryptosporidium</i> (5)	Dominican Republic (1), Spain (3), Turkey (1)
Norovirus (1)	Turkey

Hepatitis: Laboratory reports quarter 3 (July - September 2008)

	Number of Reports received			
	Quarter 3, 2008	Quarter 3, 2007	Cumulative Total to September 2008	Cumulative Total to September 2007
Hepatitis A	0	0	4	0
Hepatitis B	13	26	69	81
Hepatitis C	27 (1)	23 (2)	104 (7)*	87 (13)

The figure in brackets represents those reports for which an association with intravenous drug use was noted on the laboratory request form

Comment:

Hepatitis A

There were no reports of Hepatitis A during the third quarter of 2008.

Hepatitis B

13 cases of Hepatitis B were reported during this reporting period, 2 of which were classified as acute Hepatitis B infection. 5 were male, aged between 21 and 46 years; 8 cases were female, aged between 21 and 56 years.

Hepatitis C

27 cases of Hepatitis C were reported during the third quarter of 2008. 15 cases were male, aged between 23 years and 62 years; 10 cases were female, aged between 29 and 54 years. In 2 cases sex was unknown.

Contributing Laboratories

Altnagelvin

Mater

Antrim

Regional Virus

Belfast City

Royal Hospitals Bacteriology

Causeway

Tyrone County

Craigavon

Ulster

Greenpark

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