Legionellosis Outbreak Toolbox

Updated: November 2019

Key reference documents

- WHO legionellosis fact sheet (Geneva; World Health Organization; 2018).

Case definitions

WHO suggested outbreak case definition

Suspected case:
- Relevant pneumonic or non-pneumonic illness but no supporting microbiological evidence.

Confirmed case:
- Relevant pneumonic illness and microbiological evidence of infection.

Discarded case:
- No microbiological evidence of infection.

WHO surveillance case definitions

- Combined microbiological and epidemiological case definitions are used for surveillance of legionellosis. Depending on the diagnostic method used and the result, cases are classified microbiologically as either confirmed or presumptive.
- Based on the patient’s clinical history, cases are classified as one of the following:
  - Legionnaires’ disease (relevant pneumonic illness and microbiological evidence of infection).
  - Pontiac fever or similar illness (relevant non-pneumonic illness and microbiological evidence of infection).
  - Asymptomatic legionellae infection (no illness compatible with microbiological result).
  - Legionella infection (microbiological evidence of infection but symptoms not known).


For more information: outbreaktoolkit@who.int
Suspected legionellosis (relevant pneumonic or non-pneumonic illness but no supporting microbiological evidence).

WHO other definitions:

- **Hospital acquired (nosocomial)**
  - Date(s) of admission to hospital(s) before onset of symptoms.

- **Community acquired**
  - Known exposure to cooling towers, whirlpool spas, showers, etc.

- **Travel associated**
  - Countries visited, dates of stay, name and address of accommodation used, room number, name of tour operator, use of showers, spa pools, etc.

- **Domestically acquired**
  - Use of domestic water system during incubation period, in absence of other risk exposures.

Data collection tools:

- Case report forms: Not available.
- Line list: Not available.
- Electronic tools: Not available.

Laboratory confirmation:


Response tools and resources:

- Not available.

Training:

- Not available
Other resources

- Legionnaires' disease outbreak case definitions (Stockholm; European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control).
- Legionnaires' disease outbreak investigation toolbox (Stockholm: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control; 2019).
- CDC Outbreak Investigation (Atlanta: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2019).
- CDC Epidemiology Investigation Resources (Atlanta: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018).
- CDC Legionella fact sheet (Atlanta: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018).
- CDC Legionella materials (Atlanta: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018).