



Final Program and Abstracts

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 Outbreak Of Gastrointestinal Disease Linked To Clover Sprouts Grown From Chlorine-Pretreated Seeds.

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Background: Outbreaks of life-threatening infections from eating alfalfa and radish sprouts have led some producers to seek alternative seeds, such as clover, and to presoak seeds in concentrated chlorine solutions to reduce bacterial contamination. In 1999, an outbreak of *Salmonella* serotype Typhimurium infections occurred in Colorado associated with consumption of clover sprouts grown from chlorine-pretreated seed. **Methods:** We compared patients, defined as Colorado residents with diarrhea (≥ 3 bowel movements in 24 hours) and clinical cultures yielding the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* Typhimurium (based on PFGE), with controls matched by age and telephone prefix. We inspected two implicated sprouteries to review records and collect environmental and product samples, and traced lot numbers of seed used for sprouting at each facility. **Results:** We enrolled 20 patients and 58 controls. Ten (52%) of 19 cases vs. none of 58 controls recalled eating alfalfa-style sprouts in the 5-day period before the patient's illness (matched odds ratio undefined, $p < 0.00001$). Sprouts eaten by patients were traced to two sprouters in Colorado, which had grown clover sprouts from a common lot of seed not distributed to any other Colorado sprouteries. The time at which these sprouters used the implicated seed lot and the geographic area where these clover sprouts were sold matched the time and place of occurrences of illness. One of the two sprouteries presoaked seeds in 2% calcium hypochlorite for 20 minutes. The number of infections attributable to this sprouterie, adjusted per bag of implicated seed used, was fewer than for the sprouterie that did not presoak seeds (0.20 vs. 0.92 cases/bag of seed). An environmental swab collected at the sprouterie that presoaked seeds yielded the outbreak strain of *Salmonella*. **Conclusions:** This outbreak is the first to link clover sprouts to human enteric illness. The source was likely contaminated clover seeds. Presoaking clover seeds in chlorine solutions reduces the risk of infection but does not ensure the safety of sprouted seed. Additional methods are needed to eliminate bacterial pathogens from seeds used for sprouting.

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 Legionellosis In The Department Of Veterans Affairs (DVA)

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Legionella pneumonia often affects elderly, male smokers with underlying co-morbidities, a population served by the DVA's Veterans Health Administration (VHA). Also, infection with *Legionella* may be acquired nosocomially and be amenable to prevention strategies. The Infectious Diseases Program Office (IDPO) of the VHA has been tracking *Legionella* infection since 1992 using an annual survey/census instrument sent to all DVA medical facilities. The IDPO has also implemented an automated surveillance system, the Emerging Pathogens Initiative (EPI), a laboratory search/extract program, which provides data monthly on 14 entities including *Legionella* infection. Using these two data bases, information about legionellosis in the VHA has been ob-

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