



## Emerging and Reemerging Infectious Diseases, Region of the Americas

Vol. 2, No. 23—5 August 2004

### **Outbreak of Aseptic Meningitis in Puerto Rico**

On 16 July 2004, the Department of Health of Puerto Rico confirmed the existence of an outbreak of aseptic meningitis in the southern part of Puerto Rico. A total of 17 cases have been reported in the areas of Patillas, Arroyo, Santa Isabel, Salinas, and Guayama. Laboratory tests confirm that all the cases investigated correspond to aseptic meningitis.

It is estimated that the outbreak began in the south at the end of June and then spread to 6 of the 8 regions. The new regions with confirmed cases were Arecibo, Fajardo, Caguas, Bayamón, and Aguadilla. In the metropolitan area, several cases were reported that are currently under evaluation.

Up to Epidemiological Week (EW) 30 (25–31 July 2004) 118 cases had been recorded. The data confirm the trend towards control of the outbreak. No deaths or unfavorable clinical developments have been reported in any of the patients, which—according to the Department of Health—confirm the benign nature of this outbreak.

On 2 August 2004, the Secretary of Health, Dr. Johnny Rullán, reported that the results of the samples sent to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the United States (CDC) in Atlanta confirmed that the cause of the outbreak of aseptic meningitis affecting the island since mid-June is Echovirus 30.

The main focus of the interventions to control the outbreak has been placed on general measures for prevention and basic hygiene, in addition to an active surveillance system for following up on the magnitude and geographical extension of the outbreak and taking specific control measures.

**Source:** Department of Health of Puerto Rico.