



Emerging and Reemerging Infectious Diseases, Region of the Americas

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Influenza outbreaks in Tocantins, Brazil

On November 17th, 2003 Tocantins State Health Department (SES/TO) reported to Brazil's Health Surveillance Secretariat (Secretaria de Vigilância em Saúde, SVS) the occurrence of cases of an illness with respiratory manifestations in the Araguacena municipality.

According with the preliminary report sent by SES/TO, about 250 cases were identified of acute illness characterized by elevated fever and cough (initially dry, evolving into productive cough), accompanied by arthralgia, myalgia, and cephalalgia. The most affected groups were children and young adults. Of 13 nasopharyngeal secretion samples collected, 5 (38.4%) were positive for Influenza A (H3N2). In addition, more specific tests for Influenza are being performed on these samples to better determine the antigenic characteristic of this strain.

Another outbreak was notified to SES/TO in Pium municipality, with similar clinical characteristics, but with the occurrence of bronchopneumonia-type complications. Twenty three samples of respiratory secretion were collected during the epidemiologic investigation and are also being processed at the Instituto Evandro Chagas/SVS/MS. The preliminary results (rapid test for respiratory viruses) were positive for Influenza A in 12 samples (52.2%). More specific tests will also be performed on these samples.

According to information from SES/TO, the intensity of these outbreaks is diminishing. SVS continues to watch this situation closely and to technically support SES/TO, as necessary. It must be emphasized that the results of the epidemiological investigation performed until now are preliminary, and that final results of the tests being performed must be awaited in order to completely elucidate the problem.

Source: [5 december 2003, technical note. Ministry of Health Brazil](#)