



Messenger

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Valley Fever Update: California 2018

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) recently released an update on the disease burden of *Coccidioidomycosis*, often called Valley Fever, for California for the first quarter of 2018. Statewide cases of the disease have increased nearly four-fold over the same quarter in 2017. While some jurisdictions have seen a significant increase or doubling of cases, San Luis Obispo County has seen a five-fold increase in cases—from 22 in 2017 to 122 cases recorded during this period in 2018.

While it is not possible to discern causes, this surge in cases follows a familiar pattern of an increase in cases after the conclusion of a rainy season with large amounts of rainfall. One might be tempted to equate the magnitude of rainfall to the number of cases seen later, but there are many factors to consider.

One significant factor that remains unmeasured is the consideration of Valley Fever in the differential diagnostic thinking of health care providers when a patient presents with signs and symptoms of community-acquired pneumonia. Considering Valley Fever and ordering the correct tests can lead to the diagnosis.

Uncomplicated Valley Fever infection can be determined with blood tests. Typically the early-appearing immunoglobulin class M (IgM) anti-coccidioidal antibody is detected by the Immunodiffusion test (ID), while the later-appearing immunoglobulin class G (IgG) anti-coccidioidal antibody is detected by the Complement Fixation (CF) test. When both tests are positive for an individual with the typical clinical picture, the diagnosis is convincing. The CF test is also useful to monitor the patient prognostically as the persistent elevation of the CF titer can be indicative of dissemination of the organism in host tissues.

Culture and pathologic examination of tissues is often the strategy in the most severe cases of dissemination of the fungus. The County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Laboratory can perform molecular hybridization testing to definitively identify the fungus, when culture isolates of the mold are recovered by hospital laboratories.

Possible Norovirus Outbreak: Canadian Oysters, April 2018

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH), in conjunction with Canadian and local public health officials of Contra Costa, Los Angeles,

Orange, Riverside, Santa Barbara, San Diego and Ventura counties, report the investigation of a food-borne illness outbreak associated with the consumption of raw oysters originating in one Canadian oyster farm.

While the signs and symptoms of illness are consistent with a norovirus outbreak, only a single patient specimen has been shown to be positive for norovirus. Confirmation of the agent as the outbreak cause requires at least two positive specimens.

You might be interested to know that the County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Laboratory performs testing on shellfish and shellfish-growing waters for growers in San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and San Diego counties.

Webinar: Clinical and Public Health Laboratory Partnership to Stop the Spread of CRE and Drug-Resistant Candida

The Antibiotic Resistance (AR) Laboratory Network supports nationwide laboratory capacity to rapidly detect and characterize antibiotic resistance and inform local responses to prevent the spread of pathogens such as Carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae (CRE) and emerging antifungal-resistant threats such as *Candida auris*.

Representatives from the AR Lab Network will describe the efforts to measure and minimize the public health impact of AR as well as provide an overview of the type of testing being performed, the types of isolates requested from clinical lab partners, and a description of how isolates should be submitted to a state or regional AR Lab Network laboratory. The webinar will conclude with an example of how the AR Lab Network was utilized to investigate and contain CRE infections in a clinical facility.

You must register to attend. Registration is free with CEU and unlimited access to the archive program for six months. Learn more and register at: www.pathlms.com/asm/courses/7198.

Register Today!

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