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Bulletin No. 23
December 23, 1974

Botulism – Scammon Bay, Alaska

On November 29, 1974, a six-year-old girl from Scammon Bay became ill with vomiting and dry throat. Because of increasing obtundation, the patient was air evacuated to the Public Health Service Hospital in Bethel, Alaska. On admission, dry mucous membranes were noted and the pupils reacted normally. Except for obtundation, the neurologic exam was normal. Over the next two days, ptosis, non-reactive pupils, hoarseness, inability to swallow liquids, constipation and urinary retention developed. On December 1, the diagnosis of botulism was entertained and the patient was treated with four vials of Trivalent ABE botulinal anti-toxin. There was gradual improvement over the next several days with complete recovery. Type E botulinal toxin was identified in the patient's pre-treatment serum. Epidemiologic investigation revealed that the patient's parents and five siblings (age 1-11) were asymptomatic.

On November 28, 1974, the patient's family had eaten dried smoked salmon, dipped in seal oil. The salmon had been caught in the Autumn and stored in an airtight seal skin. All family members reported eating pieces of the salmon. Results of toxin analysis on the patient's stool, family members' sera, salmon and seal oil are pending.

(Reported by George Barker, M.D., Robert Hurwitz, M.D., L.J. Fagnon, M.D., George Brenneman, M.D. Physicians, Public Health Service Hospital, Bethel; Gemma Akerelrea, Health Aide, Scammon Bay; Margaret Wheeler, R.N., Public Health Nurse; and Salley Elliott, R.N.)

Influenza

Sporadic cases of influenza-like disease associated with an increase in influenza isolates have been reported on the island of Oahu. Within the continental United States, isolated cases of influenza have been reported during the month of November from California, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Utah and Virginia. All seroconversions and viral isolates have been Type A influenza virus. There has been no confirmed influenza in Alaska.

(Reported from *Morbidity and Mortality*, Vol. 23, No. 48, Week Ending November 30, 1974.)

Got A Question

If you have a public health or communicable disease question, call the local regional health office:

Northern Region – Fairbanks – 452-1592
Southcentral Region – Anchorage – 274-1715
Southeastern Region – Juneau – 586-1120

or by contacting the Section of Communicable Disease Control in Anchorage – 272-7534

We wish you a very happy holiday.