



Bulletin No. 4

February 24, 1975

Staphylococcal Foodborne Outbreak

On February 2, 1975, 143 passengers and one stewardess were hospitalized in Copenhagen with gastroenteritis symptoms following a breakfast served aboard a commercial airline. An additional 53 passengers were ill but did not require hospitalization. Overall attack rate for the passengers was 57% (196 of 343 passengers). Symptoms were compatible with staphylococcal intoxication and preformed enterotoxin was isolated from the ham and omelet served for breakfast. *S. aureus* with identical phage types were isolated from passengers' stool and vomitus, ham and omelet, and two sores from the hand of a cook who prepared portions of the breakfast in Anchorage.

Investigation revealed that the cook contaminated 205-217 portions of ham; 133 portions were served to the 133 passengers in galleys 1 and 2, 72-84 portions were served to the 210 passengers in galleys 3 and 4. Specific attack rates were 86% for galleys 1 and 2, and 39% for galleys 3 and 4, further implicating the ham which had been prepared by the cook. Prior to the serving of breakfast, the ham and omelet were kept at room temperature for approximately six hours during preparation, at possibly 50° F. for 14½ hours during storage, and probably at room temperature for an additional 8 hours aboard the plane. *S. aureus* isolated from the omelet was believed to have come from the ham which had been served on top of the omelet.

This outbreak demonstrates again the importance of barring from food preparation any individual with an infected sore. Equally important, it demonstrates the necessity to maintain adequate time-temperature relationships in food preparation.

INFLUENZA: CONFIRMED AT LAST

Influenza virus has been cultured from specimens originating in Anchorage and Fairbanks. The influenza has been tentatively identified as Type A, Port Chalmers. Hence there is little doubt that the flu-like illness reported from many parts of the state has been due to Type A influenza.

In the past two weeks, influenza illness has been reported from the Glennallen area and Juneau.

(Reported by the Virology Rabies Laboratory, Fairbanks)