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**Bulletin No. 4**  
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**Meningococcal Meningitis - Two Year Review**

Fifty-six cases of meningococcal meningitis occurred in Alaska in 1976 and 1977 (see figure). Thirty-two of the cases have been confirmed as Group A. Of the remaining cases, 7 cases were Group B, 1 case each of Group C, Group Y, Group W138 and the serogroups of the remaining cases are unknown. Prior to March, 1976, no cases of Group A meningococcal disease had been reported in Alaska in the preceding 20 years. Of the 32 patients with Group A disease, 23 have occurred in Natives and 9 in non-Natives. Two groups seem to be at a much greater risk of acquiring meningococcal meningitis; Native children less than 10 years of age where nine cases have occurred for a yearly attack rate of 23 per 100,000, and adult Natives with a history of excessive alcohol use where 12 cases have occurred for a yearly attack rate estimated at 83 per 100,000. The normal yearly attack rate is considered to be 3 per 100,000. In 1976 and 1977, four deaths occurred; in a two-year-old, 18-month-old, a 53-year-old and a 76-year-old. Two of the deaths were due to Group A disease, 1 to Group B, and 1 to an unknown serogroup.

An aggressive program exists to see that all contacts of identified case receive Rifampin chemoprophylaxis. During 1976 and 1977, only one secondary case of meningococcal meningitis occurred in a five-year-old Native child in the Dillingham area who did not receive Rifampin.

In 1976 and 1977, Group A meningococcal meningitis vaccine was administered in Anchorage and Fairbanks to members of the alcoholic community. Since that time, only one case has occurred in that population, in a 30-year-old Native male who had received Group A vaccine one year prior to the onset of his illness with Group A disease.

Meningococcal meningitis germs are spread from person to person by direct contact of droplets and discharges from the nose and throat of infected persons. The incubation period is from two to ten days. Up to 33% of secondary cases occur within four days after the hospitalization of the index case. We urge all health care workers to maintain a very high index of suspicion of this disease so that rapid diagnosis will be possible. We wish to thank all health care providers for their rapid reporting of patients suspected of having meningococcal meningitis.

<b>GROUP A MENINGOCOCCAL MENINGITIS</b>			
	Alcohol	No Alcohol	Total
Native	12	11	23
Non-Native	4	5	9
Total	16	16	32
Age	Alcohol	No Alcohol	Total
Less than or equal to 10	0	10	10
11-19	0	2	2
More than or equal to 20	16	4	20

# Meningococcal Meningitis - Alaska

A = Type A Case  
  = Not Type A or not Typed

