

# Overseas briefs

**Source: World Health Organization (WHO)**

**This material has been condensed from information on the WHO Internet site. A link to this site can be found under 'Other Australian and international communicable diseases sites' on the CDI homepage.**

## *New variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, France*

On 17 December, the French collaborative study group for CJD confirmed (by cerebral biopsy) a new case of nvCJD in France. The patient, who is still alive, is a female aged 36 years old; she has never been to the United Kingdom. The total number of confirmed cases of nvCJD in France is now two.

The worldwide total is now 50 cases, of which there has been a total of 46 confirmed cases, plus 2 probable cases, in the United Kingdom.

## *Cholera, Comoros*

An outbreak of cholera has occurred on Anjouan Island, Comoros, where a total of 103 cases with 14 deaths were reported between 11 November and 17 December 1999. The most affected district was Domoni, which accounted for 52 cases and 10 of the reported deaths. Health education and sanitary measures are being implemented.

WHO, other UN agencies and NGOs are collaborating with the Ministry of Health to organise medical supplies and other assistance, which are required to control this outbreak.

## *Meningococcal disease in Hungary*

The Ministry of Health has informed WHO of an outbreak of meningococcal disease which began in early December 1999, in the Bács-Kiskun area (in Kecskemet city and Szabadszallas town). As of 5 January, 30 cases and 4 deaths had been reported (case-fatality rate, 13.3%). The National Epidemiology Centre in Budapest has confirmed *Neisseria meningitidis* groups B and C. Protection and prevention measures include chemoprophylaxis of close contacts with rifampicin, and immunization (with bivalent A/C serogroup vaccine).

## *Imported case of Lassa fever in Germany*

The Ministry of Health of Bavaria has informed WHO that the diagnosis of Lassa fever in a 23 year old female student has been confirmed by PCR and virus culture performed at the Bernard Nocht Institute in Hamburg.

The student reportedly had spent November and December in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. She returned to Germany on 7 January via Lisbon, Portugal and was immediately admitted to a general hospital with fever and flu-like symptoms. Her condition deteriorated rapidly and after 4 days she was transferred to the Tropical Medicine Department of Würzburg Hospital where she is being treated in an isolation ward.

Although the risk of transmission to others is considered to be minimal (requires contact with blood or body fluids), possible contacts are being investigated. German authorities have issued notices to passengers who travelled on the same flight from Portugal to Germany asking them to contact health officials if they become ill. WHO is working with Portuguese health authorities to trace possible contacts during the student's travel to and in Portugal.

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### **Website**

<http://www.health.gov.au/pubhlth/cdi/cdihtml.htm>

### **Contributions**

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This journal is indexed by *Index Medicus* and Medline.

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