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## OUTBREAK

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### Invasive meningococcal disease outbreak in western Sydney

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The Western Sector Public Health Unit was notified of ten cases of invasive meningococcal disease between 3 and 29 August 1996. The cases presented to the emergency departments of four hospitals in western Sydney, with seven of the cases presenting to one emergency department.

Six of the cases were males. Seven were between 14 and 21 years of age, and the other three cases were aged two years (two cases) and 46 years. Seven of the ten cases live in the same area in western Sydney. In eight of the ten cases there was an association with a nightclub in the area - either the cases themselves (three cases) or household contacts had been to the nightclub.

We isolated *Neisseria meningitidis* serogroup C serotype 2a subtype P1.5 from the cerebrospinal fluid and/or blood from seven of the ten cases. Isolates from three cases were identical on pulsed field gel electrophoresis. We are awaiting results on the remaining isolates. In two cases the cerebrospinal fluid and/or blood cultures were sterile. In the most recent case, it is too early to comment on the blood

cultures. The exceptional laboratory support from Department of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases, South Western Area Pathology Service (SWAPS), a laboratory of The National Neisseria Network, and quick turn around time for typing of positive cultures and for performing pulsed field gel electrophoresis has enabled us to be better informed in our outbreak investigation and public health interventions.

At the time of writing, five cases are still in hospital, and no deaths have been reported. The outbreak investigation is continuing.

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