



INFORME RESUMEN DE AMENAZAS A LA SALUD PÚBLICA INTERNACIONAL

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10 INFANTS DEAD IN CALIFORNIA WHOOPING COUGH OUTBREAK

Whooping cough, also known as pertussis, has claimed the 10th victim in California, in what health officials are calling the worst outbreak in 60 years. Since the beginning of the year, 5,978 confirmed, probable and suspected cases of the disease have been reported in California. All of the deaths occurred in infants under the age of 3 months, says Michael Sicilia, a spokesman for the California Department of Public Health. Nine were younger than 8 weeks old, which means they were too young to have been vaccinated against this highly contagious bacterial disease.

"This is a preventable disease," says Sicilia, because there is a vaccine for whooping cough to protect those coming in contact with infants, and thereby protect the infants. However, some parents are choosing to not vaccinate their children. In other cases, previously vaccinated children and adults may have lost their immunity because the vaccine has worn off.

Sicilia says California Health Department epidemiologists estimate 50 percent of the children who have gotten sick were infected by their parents or caregivers. According to the recommended vaccine schedule for infants, newborns don't get their first pertussis vaccine until they are 2 months old, leaving them vulnerable to infection until then if the people surrounding them are infected.

"That's why the real important message is -- whether it's a mom, dad, sibling, grandfather or grandmother that comes in contact with these really young babies -- all the close contacts, including the health care professionals, need to be vaccinated," says Patti. It's called the "cocooning strategy," where the newborns are protected because the older people around them have been vaccinated and protected from pertussis, and therefore won't pass it on to little babies.

Fuente: Medisys

EXPERTS INVESTIGATE DISEASE OUTBREAK IN RURAL HAITI

Health officials in rural Haiti are investigating a possible disease outbreak that could be responsible for dozens of deaths and a surge in hospital patients, U.N. aid workers said Wednesday.

Haitian government officials say at least 19 people have died after suffering brief bouts of fever, vomiting and severe diarrhea, with dozens of more deaths suspected. Most are reportedly children. Hundreds of patients reporting those symptoms have overwhelmed a hospital in the seaside town of St. Marc, some 45 miles (about 70 kilometers) north of the capital of Port-au-Prince, Catherine Huck, country deputy for the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, told The Associated Press.

It remains unclear if the cases are linked. U.N. and Haitian health care workers are running tests for cholera, typhoid and other diseases, with results possible on Thursday, said OCHA-Haiti spokeswoman Jessica DuPlessis. "We are trying to connect all the dots," Huck said. The Artibonite is Haiti's most important farming region. The area was not severely damaged in the

Jan. 12 earthquake but received thousands of refugees from the wrecked capital to the south, many of whom stayed.

Hospitals in the area have enough supplies to respond to a fatal outbreak of diarrhea, including rehydration salts, for about three days, DuPlessis said. Officials overseeing sanitation and water in areas affected by the earthquake, where 1.3 million people live under tarps and tents in squatter settlements, have also been notified.

Fuente: Medisys