



Pan American
Health
Organization



World Health
Organization
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE
Americas

Informative Note: Update Cases of pneumonia due to *Legionella*

Tucumán, Argentina

3 September 2022

Situation Summary

Previous information regarding this event was published on 1 September in the *Informative Note: Cases of pneumonia due to unknown cause in Tucumán, Argentina*, available at: <https://bit.ly/3ekFud8>.

As of today, a total of 11 cases of pneumonia linked to this cluster have been reported, including 4 deaths, with onset of symptoms between 18 and 25 August 2022. All cases are linked to the same private clinic in San Miguel de Tucumán.

Of the 11 cases, 7 are men with a median age of 45-years-old. The cases presented fever, myalgia, diarrhea, dyspnea and headache as the most frequent symptoms. Ten of the 11 cases presented underlying or risk conditions, the most frequent being: hypertension, smoking and diabetes.

Of the 11 cases, currently 4 cases are hospitalized, two under ambulatory care, one has been discharged and four have died. Preliminary investigation indicates that the fatal cases had comorbidities.

So far, the results of the investigation indicate that all the cases are linked by place and time, that there are no new cases after 25 August 2022 and no secondary cases have been identified. The cluster is limited to eight (8) health care workers and three patients from the private clinic.

The samples were initially analyzed in the local laboratory and later sent to the National Administration of Laboratories and Health Institutes (ANLIS) "Dr. Carlos G. Malbrán" for additional testing.

On 3 September 2022, the ANLIS reported that amplification products of the 16S ribosomal gene for *Legionella* were sequenced from two bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL) samples by massive sequencing and by four bioinformatic analysis methods, with results were compatible with *Legionella pneumophila*. In the preliminary results of two BAL samples analyzed by total DNA sequencing (metagenomics), readings are compatible with *Legionella spp.* Confirmation of these results is pending of the sequencing processes. In addition, culture and seroconversion analysis are ongoing, which are complementary tests for *Legionella* infection among the affected patients.

Legionella, particularly *L. pneumophila* species, is associated with outbreaks of severe pneumonia. The most common way of its transmission is the inhalation of contaminated aerosols, produced in conjunction with sprays, jets or mists of water.

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Public health response

The Argentina Ministry of Health and provincial health authorities are implementing public health measures, including investigation to determine the source of the outbreak, follow up on all those potentially exposed to identify possible new cases and implement care in a timely manner.

PAHO/WHO is supporting the health authorities of Argentina in the characterization and implementation of specific prevention and control measures.