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Date: Thu 21 Dec 2006

From: ProMED-mail <promed@promedmail.org>

Source: Kyodo News, via The Japan Times, Thu 21 Dec 2006 [edited]

<<http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nm20061221f2.html>>

Travel advice

Traveling overseas sometimes means the specter of infectious disease, such as the case of two Japanese men who died of rabies, one in November and the other in December, from separate dog bites in the Philippines. Medical experts say there are 5 major areas of concern when traveling abroad. Most conspicuous is enteritis caused by *Escherichia coli* form bacillus, salmonella and noroviruses. It is also called traveler's diarrhea because of its symptoms.

"About 10 percent of Japanese staying overseas for a week suffer from the disease. You should be on alert not only in developing but also in advanced countries," said Atsuo Hamada, acting director general of the Japan Overseas Health Administration Center at the Japan Labor Health and Welfare Organization.

The stomach's defenses are liable to become weaker due to fatigue from traveling, and food and drink become a source of infection. Therefore, it is important to select mineral or boiled water and to eat cooked food, he said. Influenza, colds and other respiratory infectious diseases also need caution. When it is arid, viruses easily get into the throat and the nasal mucosa. The risk rises when travelers find themselves in such arid environments as aircraft, buses and hotels, and when large numbers of people gather in a small space. Washing your hands, gargling and drinking large quantities of water are a must, said Hamada, who is also an executive of the Japanese Society of Travel and Health.

Travelers are also asked not to approach places where live birds are sold in light of concerns over avian influenza.

The 3rd source of infectious disease is the bite of a mosquito. Dengue fever, spreading chiefly in Southeast Asia and Latin America, causes headaches and joint pain, and the disease can sometimes become serious. Malaria is spreading in tropical and subtropical zones. Annually, about 100 Japanese develop symptoms of the disease after returning home, and several have died. Travelers to places where mosquitoes are a problem should not expose their hands and legs. Wear long sleeves and trousers and use an insect-repelling spray. The 4th area of concern for infections comprises sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV and syphilis and those that can be contracted at medical institutions in developing countries, including HIV and hepatitis B. "In addition to cautious deeds, travelers are asked to choose a clean hospital as far as possible," Hamada said.

The 5th concern is rabies. Because the virus is also carried by mammals other than dogs, the typical source of infection, travelers should not approach animals without caution. If bitten, they should immediately go to a hospital, he said.

"Before going abroad, travelers should confirm what infectious diseases are spreading, where hospitals are located and how to receive treatment. Depending on the circumstances, they should consider getting vaccinations beforehand," Hamada said.

[Byline: Toshiyuki Tanimoto]

[4]

Date: Tue 19 Dec 2006

From: ProMED-mail <promedm@promedmail.org>

Source: China Daily, Xinhua News Agency report, Tue 19 Dec 2006 [edited]

<http://english.people.com.cn/200612/19/eng20061219_333888.html>

Japan has been hit by an outbreak of a common stomach virus, prompting the prime minister to call for steps to deal with

infections that have reached a record high this winter. Over 65 600 people throughout the country are thought to have been infected by norovirus between 27 Nov and 3 Dec 2006, the highest since data was first collected in 1989, according to the National Institute of Infectious Diseases. Four people living at nursing homes, 3 in their 90s, died due to the [norovirus] infection which causes severe diarrhoea and vomiting, the Asahi newspaper reported yesterday, saying all but 2 of Japan's 47 prefectures have issued warnings of a potential epidemic.

"Prime Minister (Shinzo) Abe has given instructions to the relevant ministries to prevent the spread of the infection," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuhisa Shiozaki told a news conference. The Health Ministry says there are no vaccines against the virus and advises people to wash their hands carefully before eating and after using the toilet. Shares in companies that make products to protect against norovirus have shot up on the Tokyo stock exchange, with hand wash and gargle maker Meiji Seika Kaisha Ltd jumping 11.5 per cent in the past week. Other beneficiaries include clinical reagents maker Eiken Chemical Co, whose have risen 14.8 per cent in a week.

The ministry said shellfish including oysters should be thoroughly cooked to destroy the virus, as it is often found in such seafood. Norovirus has caused mass infections in other countries, including the United States, where hundreds of passengers on a cruise ship fell ill to it in 2 separate incidents in early December and in November.

[5]

Date: Sat 23 Dec 2006

From: ProMED-mail <promed@promedmail.org>

Source: The Yomiuri Shimbun, Sat 23 Dec 2006 [edited]

<<http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/20061223TDY02003.htm>>

At least 69 primary, middle and high schools in 17 prefectures have temporarily suspended school or classes since November, as gastroenteritis caused by the highly infectious norovirus continues to spread, according to a Yomiuri Shimbun survey of prefectural boards of education.

Norovirus is highly infectious and spreads rapidly. Schools hope the epidemic will taper off during winter holidays. Seventeen schools in Hokkaido and Akita, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Nagano and Niigata prefectures have closed temporarily, including 12 primary schools, 2 middle schools, 2 high schools and one school for disabled children. Six primary schools and a high school of 5 prefectures temporarily suspended all classes for one grade. Forty-five primary and middle schools in 12 prefectures also suspended classes temporarily.

However, the actual situation could be even worse than reported because prefectural boards of education are aware only of cases reported to them by municipal boards of education -- which are not obligated to report such cases to prefectural boards of education.

In Niigata Prefecture, 5 schools closed entire schools or classes for certain grades. A Nagaoka primary school recorded the prefecture's highest number of the gastroenteritis victims when 72 of its 410 students called in sick on 30 Nov. Sixty-one students who came to school also complained of stomachaches, and 30 percent of all students showed symptoms of gastroenteritis.

Norovirus was detected in some of the students. Because no outbreak was reported at middle schools that use the same school meal provision service, the epidemic likely was not food-borne, but an infection that spread among the students. The primary school was closed the next day and resumed usual classes on 5 Dec 2006. However, new cases have continued to appear even as recently as Monday.

In Odate, Akita Prefecture, food poisoning from meals provided through a school food service has struck many students and staff. Primary and middle schools in the city reported a surge in absent students from 14 Dec, and 8 schools closed temporarily on the afternoon on 15 Dec. According to the city board of education, 443 students, teachers and school staff had developed infectious

gastroenteritis caused by norovirus as of Thursday [21 Dec 2006]. The Odate Health Care Center traced the cause of the food poisoning to bread that was on the menu of all the schools, and norovirus was detected in an employee of the company that made the bread. Some infected students apparently passed on the virus to their families.

In Saitama Prefecture, primary schools in Ageo, Honjo and Kawagoe closed classes temporarily. The prefectural board of education instructed municipal boards of education to provide students with advice about hygiene. But despite these efforts, the epidemic has continued in many areas since.

The Education, Science and Technology Ministry told prefectural boards of education to take steps to ensure adequate hygiene levels are maintained at schools.

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[The extent of the current norovirus outbreak in Japan appears to be unprecedented, provoking both the intervention of the Prime Minister and causing perturbations in the Tokyo stock-market. - Mod.CP]

[see also:

- Norovirus - Japan [20061217.3543](#)
- Norovirus, increased activity - Europe [20061214.3522](#)
- Norovirus, oysters - USA (OR) ex Korea [20061213.3503](#)
- Norovirus - Japan (multi-prefecture) [20061209.3479](#)
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Ministry offers advice on norovirus

The Yomiuri Shimbun

Infectious gastroenteritis caused by norovirus is spreading, and in many cases patients were infected indirectly, as they touched other patients' vomit or excretion, or the norovirus was transferred to food or tableware via people's hands.

The following advice from experts at the Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry offers possible preventive measures at home and advice on how to clean up vomit from sufferers of the virus.

The disease caused by norovirus is generally known as food poisoning that occurs after eating such bivalve shellfish as raw oysters and clams.

However, only 15 percent of cases last year were attributed to such shellfish. Many cases in recent years resulted from people failing to wash their hands sufficiently after touching patients' vomit or other excretions containing a large amount of the virus, or failing to thoroughly clean rooms where patients were treated.

Experts assume that the surviving virus infected others through food.

The most effective preventative measure is to wash hands carefully.

Antiseptic solution, ethanol and soap available in ordinary stores cannot kill the norovirus, but it is thought that washing hands well is a good way to stop the virus from becoming attached to the fingers.

It is important to wash hands well with soap before meals, cooking and after going to the toilet.

If you feel nauseous before going to bed, place a container at the bed side should

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you have to vomit.

If the bed linen is stained with vomit, remove it carefully with a cloth, taking care to collect it all. Wash the bed linen by hand, separately from other laundry. Wash carefully and avoid inhaling the spray of the washing machine water.

To kill noroviruses, bleach containing sodium hypochlorite and heating clothes at 85 C or higher for at least a minute are effective.

Washing clothes with water or ordinary detergents cannot remove viruses.

Bleach should be diluted with water according to the label. Use carefully, as bleach can cause some types of material to lose color or become damaged.

It is recommended to soak the laundry in boiling water, dry at high temperature, and iron it.

As a futon is hard to wash, iron it with a steam iron after drying it well.

Remove vomit on the floor or carpet, with a paper towel or cloth and clean the patch repeatedly with a cloth or mop.

After use, the cloth should be cleaned to kill any remaining viruses. If it is insufficiently cleaned, the virus might escape into the atmosphere when the cloth dries and others inhaling the viruses may contract the disease.

Sodium hypochlorite also is contained in kitchen bleach, toilet bleach and mold-remover for bathroom. But cleaning the floor with cloths containing sodium hypochlorite may damage and change the color of the flooring.

During the New Year's holiday, there will be more opportunities to dine out, so if you choose bivalve shellfish off the menu, make sure they are well cooked.

Soaking cooking utensils and tableware in boiling water or cleaning them with kitchen bleach also kills the virus.

Shoji Miyakawa, deputy chief of the ministry's Safety Division said, "It's important for each of us to make efforts to eliminate the virus as much as possible to prevent the disease from spreading."

Information about noroviruses in English is available at the Web site of the National Institute of Infectious Diseases (www.nih.go.jp/niid/index-e.html) and at the ministry Web site (www.mhlw.go.jp/english/index.html).

(Dec. 22, 2006)

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Mutation likely behind virus spread

Kyodo News

The record-breaking nationwide outbreak of gastroenteritis caused by norovirus may stem from a mutation of the disease, an expert said Wednesday.

The highly contagious virus has typically been transmitted by eating raw oysters and clams, but this season's epidemic comes mostly from human-to-human infections and can best be explained by a possible outbreak of a new virus strain by, for example, mutation, said Shigeo Matsuno, a senior researcher at the National Institute of Infectious Diseases.

"The cause . . . is not eating raw oysters," Matsuno said. "It must be human-to-human infection in most cases. It is natural to think that the infection spread so rapidly because many people have no immunity to the virus."

Oysters and other bivalves often cause norovirus infection because they concentrate the virus after taking it in along with plankton in the water.

Apart from bivalve consumption, infection occurs orally when viruses in substances excreted or vomited are somehow transmitted, and in places where people are in close contiguity, such as nursing homes and schools.

Oral infection with only a small number of norovirus organisms — less than 100 — is known to cause gastroenteritis that brings stomach pain, severe diarrhea and vomiting.

Some 3,000 medical institutions across Japan reported they treated 65,638 infected patients between Nov. 27 and Dec. 3, a record-high average of 21.8 per institution, compared with 19.8 logged in the preceding week, also a record. Norovirus infection statistics have been compiled since 1981.

In previous instances, the number of cases reached a

peak after mid-December.

With the rapid increase, the institute is concerned that the outbreak of norovirus gastroenteritis may show "the largest-ever spread" and is calling for people to wash their hands with soap as a way to prevent an epidemic.

On Monday, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe urged Health, Welfare and Labor Minister Hakuo Yanagisawa to initiate action against the epidemic.

A public junior high school in Kitami, Hokkaido, closed Tuesday following a suspected norovirus outbreak, with 58 of the school's 416 students, and one teacher, suffering symptoms that include vomiting and abdominal pain since Saturday.

The Japan Times: Thursday, Dec. 21, 2006
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Travelers urged to gird for infectious ills

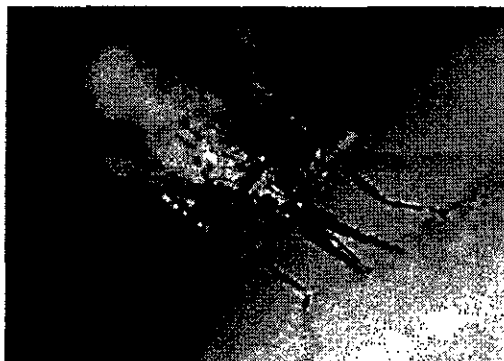
Experts counsel common-sense precautions
against menacing diseases

By TOSHIYUKI TANIMOTO

Kyodo News

Traveling overseas sometimes means the specter of infectious disease, such as the case of two Japanese men who died of rabies, one in November and the other in December, from separate dog bites in the Philippines.

Medical experts say there are five major areas of concern when traveling abroad. Most conspicuous is enteritis caused by *Escherichia coliform* bacillus, salmonella and norovirus. It is also called traveler's diarrhea because of its symptoms.



The *Anopheles*, a species of mosquito, can transmit malaria into humans. PHOTO COURTESY OF U.S. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION/KYODO

"About 10 percent of Japanese staying overseas for a week suffer from the disease. You should be on alert not only in developing but also in advanced countries," said Atsuo Hamada, acting director general of the Japan Overseas Health Administration Center at the Japan Labor Health and Welfare Organization.

The stomach's defenses are liable to become weaker due to fatigue from traveling, and food and drink become a source of infection. Therefore, it is important to select mineral or boiled water and to eat cooked food, he said.

Influenza, colds and other respiratory infectious diseases also need caution. When it is arid, viruses easily get into the throat and the nasal mucosa.

The risk rises when travelers find themselves in such arid environments as aircraft, buses and hotels, and when large numbers of people gather in a small space. Washing your hands, gargling and drinking large quantities of water are a must, said Hamada, who is also an executive of the Japanese Society of Travel and Health.

Travelers are also asked not to approach places where live birds are sold in light of concerns over avian influenza.

The third source of infectious disease is the bite of a mosquito. Dengue fever, spreading chiefly in Southeast Asia and Latin America, causes headaches and joint pain, and the disease can sometimes become serious.

Malaria is spreading in tropical and subtropical zones. Annually, about 100 Japanese develop symptoms of the disease after returning home, and several have died.

Travelers to places where mosquitoes are a problem should not expose their hands and legs. Wear long sleeves and trousers and use an insect-repelling spray.

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The fifth concern is rabies. Because the virus is also carried by mammals other than dogs, the typical source of infection, travelers should not approach animals without caution. If bitten, they should immediately go to a hospital, he said.

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Outbreak of stomach virus hits Japan

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Source: China Daily

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Virus forcing schools to halt classes

The Yomiuri Shimbun

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epidemic likely was not food poisoning, but an infection that spread among the students.

The primary school was closed the next day and resumed usual classes on Dec. 5. However, new cases have continued to appear even as recently as Monday.

"There were no sick students until Nov. 29," a city board of education official said. "I was surprised at the infectiousness of norovirus."

In Odate, Akita Prefecture, food poisoning from meals provided through a school food service has struck many students and staff.

Primary and middle schools in the city reported a surge in absent students from Dec. 14, and eight schools closed temporarily on the afternoon on Dec. 15. According to the city board of education, 443 students, teachers and school staff had developed infectious gastroenteritis caused by norovirus as of Thursday.

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医薬品 研究報告 調査報告書

<p>識別番号・報告回数</p>			<p>報告日</p>	<p>第一報入手日 2007. 1. 10</p>	<p>新医薬品等の区分 該当なし</p>	<p>機構処理欄</p>
<p>一般的名称</p>	<p>(製造承認書に記載なし)</p>			<p>ProMED 20070106-0058, 2007 Jan 6. 情報源:[1]Dr. S. K. Sharif, 2007 Jan 5. [2]Reuters Foundation AlertNet, 2007 Jan 6.</p>	<p>公表国</p>	
<p>販売名(企業名)</p>	<p>合成血「日赤」(日本赤十字社) 照射合成血「日赤」(日本赤十字社) 合成血-LR「日赤」(日本赤十字社) 照射合成血-LR「日赤」(日本赤十字社)</p>		<p>研究報告の公表状況</p>		<p>ケニヤ</p>	
<p>研究報告の概要</p>	<p>○リフトバレー熱、ケニア [1]最新情報:疫学データ 2006年12月23日、ガリッサの公立病院に入院した患者複数の症例から、リフトバレー熱のヒト感染アウトブレイクが確認された。IgM及びPCRによりリフトバレー熱ウイルス感染が確定診断された。ガリッサ地区での発病率は、19/10万、最高値は最初に患者が見つかったShanta Abakの129/10万である。症例数は2007年1月5日現在で188例に達し、うち68例が死亡した。リフトバレー熱の一般的な症状は、高熱、頭痛、筋肉痛、関節痛である。重症化した患者では、吐血や鼻出血、歯肉からの出血などの出血傾向が見られる。政府はケニア北東部で動物の検疫を開始し、家庭での動物の屠殺を禁止した。保健省は国際機関と協力して、病気の動物に触れない、生のミルクを飲まない、病気の、あるいは死んだ動物の肉を食べないなどの健康教育プログラムを開始した。 [2]2007年1月4日、ケニア北東部のIjara地区でリフトバレー熱の新規疑い例8例が国境なき医師団によって発見された。1人は死亡し、2006年12月7日のアウトブレイク開始以来67人目の死亡例となった。リフトバレー熱は稀なウイルス性疾患で、感染した動物の血液や体液、組織との接触や蚊の媒介によってヒトに感染する。感染した蚊の卵が河の土手周辺で休眠しており、洪水などで水につかると蚊となってウイルス感染を拡大するようになる。この地域で発生した洪水が原因で感染が拡大した。また、洪水のために感染地域や病院への道路が寸断されていることも問題である。蚊が増加してマalariaなど他の感染症が広がることも懸念されている。</p>					<p>使用上の注意記載状況・ その他参考事項等</p> <p>合成血「日赤」 照射合成血「日赤」 合成血-LR「日赤」 照射合成血-LR「日赤」</p> <p>血液を介するウイルス、 細菌、原虫等の感染 vCJD等の伝播のリスク</p>
<p>報告企業の意見</p>			<p>今後の対応</p>			
<p>ケニア北東部の洪水被害を受けた地域でリフトバレー熱の感染が拡大しているとの報告である。</p>			<p>日本赤十字社では、輸血感染症対策として問診時に海外渡航歴の有無を確認し、帰国後4週間は献血不適としている。今後も引き続き、新興・再興感染症の発生状況等に関する情報の収集に努める。</p>			