



Cholera Case Confirmed in Paraguay



(22 April 2009)

Vol. 6, No. 10

On 7 April 2009, the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare of Paraguay (*Ministerio de Salud Pública y Bienestar Social* / [MSPBS](#)) received laboratory confirmation of a case of cholera arising from *Vibrio cholerae* O:1 Ogawa, biotype El Tor, toxin producing, which occurred in a 33-year-old male patient. The date on onset of symptoms was 6 March, originating in the indigenous community of Ebetoque (Ayoreo ethnic group), located in the district of Filadelfia in the Paraguayan Chaco region. The case required a three-day hospital stay, and the patient has recovered.

On the basis of this confirmed case, an epidemiological investigation was carried out, in which **three outbreaks of acute diarrheal disease** were detected (one in the district of Loma Plata, and two in the district of Filadelfia) during the period between Epidemiological Week (EW) 51, 2008, and EW 15, 2009.

1. The first outbreak was reported between EWs 51 and 53, 2008; it affected the Enchlet community in Pesempe'o (district of Loma Plata). The precise number of persons affected could not be determined, and one (adult) death was reported.
2. The second outbreak was reported between EWs 3 and 4, 2009, and affected the Lengua community in Barrio Obrero (Filadelfia district). A total of nine cases were reported, including two deaths (in older adults). The fatality rate was 22.5%.
3. The third outbreak was reported between EWs 9 and 10, 2009, and affected the Ayorea community in Ebetogue (Filadelfia district, Boquerón department, in the Paraguayan Chaco region). It was in this community that the laboratory-confirmed cholera case was identified. A total of five cases were reported, all requiring hospitalization. No related mortality was reported. In a water sample taken from a reservoir at the site where the index case was before the onset of symptoms, a strain of *Vibrio* was identified that was biochemically compatible with *Vibrio cholerae* spp.; this sample is still being studied.

There have been no reports of similar diarrheal profiles from March of this year up to 16 April.

In all the affected communities, the diarrhea outbreaks were contained following intervention by the regional health authorities, who took measures of assure safe drinking water in local water sources (chlorination, boiling water, purchase of mineral water).

There is still no available evidence of the presence of *Vibrio cholerae* O:1 in water coming from the affected communities. However, the containment of the outbreaks following the implementation of safe drinking water strategies leads us to believe that transmission was water borne.

Source: Information received by PAHO from the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of Paraguay (*Ministerio de Salud Pública y Bienestar Social* / [MSPBS](#)).