



Emerging and Reemerging Infectious Diseases, Region of the Americas

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Pneumonia in El Salvador

The Ministry of Health reported that in Epidemiological Week (EW) 30 (ending on 26 July) 6,315 cases of pneumonia were recorded, with a cumulative of 50,394 for this year. This surpasses by 31% the total number of cases reported for the same period in 2002 and by 71% for 2001; the country remains in epidemic status according to expected number of cases (endemic channels). During the last five weeks, the SIBASI (Basic Comprehensive Health System) of Metapan, Ahuachapan, Suchitoto, Cojutepeque, San Vicente, Usulután, and Jiquilisco have registered the highest incidence rates. Of the total number of consultations, 8 out of every 10 have been given to children under 10 years of age, most of whom are under one year old (9,121 per 100,000 in the population).

With regard to hospitalizations, the Ministry of Health's hospital network reported for EW 30 an average of 325 daily hospital admissions for pneumonia.

A total of 304 institutional deaths associated with pneumonias were registered up to 26 July 2003 (see table below).

**Pneumonia-Associated Deaths by Age Group
(El Salvador, EW 30, 2002-2003)**

Deaths by Age Group	2002	2003
< 1 year	99	54
1-4 years	30	23
5-9 years	5	5
10-19 years	2	7
20-59 years	48	34
60+ years	105	181
Total	289	304
<i>Source:</i> Ministry of Health of El Salvador.		

Starting in EW 20 (ending on 17 May) and up to EW 29 (ending on 19 July), 63 samples were processed from patients in three hospitals and two health units in the metropolitan area of San Salvador and a hospital in the interior, by utilizing panels for respiratory viruses with the available reagents. Of the 27 positive samples, 16 (59%) corresponded to influenza virus A and 11 (41%) to respiratory syncytial virus. The minimum age of the patients who tested positive was 22 days; and the maximum, 29 years.

Epidemiological and laboratory studies to specify the causative agent and the risk factors related to mortality are being carried out. Additional supplies are being shipped to expand the sample size with sentinel sites.

Source: Ministry of Health of El Salvador.