References


Address for correspondence: Ferit Kuscu, Cukurova University Faculty of Medicine, Department of Infectious Diseases and Clinical Microbiology, 01250, Adana, Turkey; email: feritkuscu@gmail.com

In May 2016, an outbreak of Shiga toxin–producing *Escherichia coli* O157 infections occurred among children who had played in a stream flowing through a park. Analysis of *E. coli* isolates from the patients, stream water, and deer and coyote scat showed that feces from deer were the most likely source of contamination.

In the United States, recreational water is a relatively uncommon source of Shiga toxin–producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) O157 outbreaks (1). We describe an outbreak of STEC O157 infections among children exposed to a contaminated stream in northern California, USA, and provide laboratory evidence establishing wildlife as the source of water contamination.

In May 2016, four cases of Shiga toxin (Stx) 1– and 2–producing *E. coli* O157 infection were reported to a local health department in northern California; investigation revealed a common source of exposure. The case-patients, ranging in age from 1 to 3 years, had played in a stream adjacent to a children’s playground within a city park. Exposure of the case-patients to the stream occurred on 3 separate days spanning a 2-week period. Two case-patients are known to have ingested water while playing in the stream. Two case-patients were siblings. All case-patients had diarrhea and abdominal cramps; bloody diarrhea was reported for 3. One case-patient was hospitalized with hemolytic uremic syndrome.

The stream is a second-order waterway located in a northern California community of ≈7,500 residents. At the time of exposures, stream flow was <30 ft³/s. The land upstream is not used for agricultural activities such as live-stock production. The community is serviced by a public sewer system; inspection of sewer lines indicated no breach to the system.

Water samples were collected from the exposure site 7 days after the last case-patient was exposed and weekly thereafter for 17 weeks; samples were tested quantitatively for fecal indicator organisms. Throughout the study period, all water samples exceeded recreational water quality limits for *E. coli* and enterococci levels (2). Water samples were also cultured for STEC isolation and PCR detection of *stx1* and *stx2* (3). *Stx1*- and *Stx2*-producing *E. coli* O157 were isolated from stream water each week for the first 4 weeks. Additionally, an *Stx2*-producing *E. coli* non-O157 strain was isolated from the stream in the first week of sampling. Enrichment broth cultures of water samples were also positive by PCR for *stx1* and *stx2* for the first 4 weeks of sampling. Thereafter, both *stx1* and *stx2*, or *stx1* only, were intermittently detected in enrichment broth cultures for 9 additional weeks.

In the absence of an obvious source (e.g., upstream agricultural operation or sewer leak), wildlife was considered as a possible contributor to water contamination.

Contaminated Stream Water as Source for *Escherichia coli* O157 Illness in Children

William S. Probert, Glen M. Miller, Katya E. Ledin

Author affiliation: Napa-Solano-Yolo-Marin County Public Health Laboratory, Fairfield, California, USA

DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.3201/eid2307.170226
Thirteen fresh wildlife scat specimens were collected along the stream for STEC culture and PCR. Of the 13 scat specimens, 8 originated from deer, 2 from raccoon, and 1 each from coyote, turkey, and river otter. Six scat specimens (4 deer, 1 coyote, 1 river otter) were positive for \textit{stx}1 and \textit{stx}2 or for \textit{stx}2 by PCR (online Technical Appendix, https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/EID/article/23/7/17-0226-Techapp1.pdf). Stx1- and Stx2-producing \textit{E. coli} \textit{O157} were isolated from deer scat and coyote scat. An Stx2-producing \textit{E. coli} non-
\textit{O157} strain was isolated from a deer scat specimen. The animal origin of the coyote and river otter scat specimens were definitively identified by partial DNA sequencing of mitochondrial cytochrome b (4).

To assess strain relatedness, we compared STEC \textit{O157} isolates from the case-patients, water, deer scat, and coyote scat by using pulsed-field gel electrophoresis (PFGE) and multilocus variable-number tandem-repeat analysis (MLVA) (5). PFGE patterns for \textit{XbaI}-digested genomic DNA were highly similar among all isolates; only slight variations were found in the lower-sized bands (Figure). PFGE patterns for genomic DNA samples digested with \textit{BlnI} also demonstrated a high degree of similarity (data not shown). Furthermore, MLVA profiles were identical for the case-patient, water, and deer scat isolates; only the coyote scat isolate differed from the main profile by 2 repeats at a single locus (VNTR_3).

This study provides laboratory evidence linking STEC \textit{O157} infections with the ingestion of recreational water that was probably contaminated by wildlife scat. Wild ruminants, including deer and elk, are known carriers of STEC and have been connected to outbreaks of human infections (6–9). We detected STEC in 50% of deer scat specimens collected from the stream bank. One of these specimens, found 1.5 miles upstream of the exposure site, contained an \textit{E. coli} \textit{O157} isolate that was highly similar by molecular subtyping to case-patient and water isolates. These findings support the likelihood that feces from deer carrying STEC were the source of water contamination or, at the very least, contributed to the persistence of STEC in the water. It is unknown whether the STEC detected in coyote and river otter scat represents carriage or transitory colonization within these animals.

The common risk factor among the case-patients in this STEC \textit{O157} outbreak was exposure to a natural stream within a city park. After the outbreak was recognized, signs warning of bacterial contamination were posted along the stream. No further STEC \textit{O157} infections attributed to stream water exposure were reported.

\textbf{Acknowledgments}

We thank Frank Reyes, Keith Snipes, and Nailah Souder for their technical assistance; the County of Marin Health and Human Services and Environmental Health Services for information about the epidemiologic and environmental investigation; and the Microbial Diseases Laboratory Branch of the California Department of Public Health and the Santa Clara County Public Health Laboratory for the molecular subtyping data.

Dr. Probert is the assistant director for the Napa-Solano-Yolo-Marin County Public Health Laboratory. His research interests focus on the development of molecular diagnostic tools for the detection of infectious agents.

\textbf{References}

Diphtheria in Mayotte, 2007–2015

Emmanuel Belchior,† Sabine Henry,† Edgar Badell, Louis Collet, Thierry Benoit-Cattin, Anne-Marie de Montera, Nicole Guiso, Olivier Patey, Daniel Levy-Bruhl, Laurent Filleul, Francois Chieze, Sophie Olivier

Author affiliations: Santé Publique France, Saint-Maurice, France (E. Belchior, D. Levy-Bruhl); Agence Régionale de Santé Océan Indien, Saint-Denis, France (S. Henry, F. Chieze); Institut Pasteur, Paris, France (E. Badell, N. Guiso); Centre Hospitalier de Mayotte, Mamoudzou, France (L. Collet, T. Benoit-Cattin, A.-M. de Montera, S. Olivier); Centre Hospitalier Intercommunal, Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, France (O. Patey); Santé Publique France, Saint-Denis de La Réunion, France (L. Filleul)

DOI: https://doi.org/10.3201/eid2307.170262

Epidemiology of diphtheria in the southwestern Indian Ocean is poorly documented. We analyzed 14 cases of infection with toxigenic Corynebacterium diphtheriae reported during 2007–2015 in Mayotte, a French department located in this region. Local control of diphtheria is needed to minimize the risk for importation of the bacterium into disease-free areas.

Diphtheria due to toxigenic Corynebacterium diphtheriae occurs sporadically across Europe, mostly in persons who emigrated from disease-endemic countries (1,2). Systemic toxic effects occur in cutaneous diphtheria but less commonly than in pharyngeal or laryngeal diphtheria. C. diphtheriae is a well-recognized cause of chronic, nonhealing skin ulcers in the tropics (3,4). In France, diphtheria has been a reportable disease since 1945. A vaccination program began in the late 1940s; no cases were reported during 1990–2001, and 13 cases were reported, all in visitors or immigrants to France, since 2002. However, the epidemiology of diphtheria in the southwestern Indian Ocean region, where several French departments are located, is poorly documented.

Mayotte, a French department, is an island of the Comoros archipelago (Figure) and an attractive destination for migrants from the area. In 2012, Mayotte had 212,645 inhabitants, at least 40% foreign born (5). We analyzed all cases of infection with toxigenic C. diphtheriae reported in Mayotte since 2007 to evaluate the potential risk for dissemination of diphtheria inside and outside this area.

During 2007–2015, local hospitals reported 14 cases of toxigenic C. diphtheriae infection to the local health authorities: 1 case in an infant with severe respiratory symptoms who died from multiple organ failure and 13 cutaneous diphtheria cases in patients who survived. Most of the patients (11/14) were male, and the median age was 11 years (range 2 months–39 years). Eight patients had recently (most within 1 month) emigrated from neighboring islands.

Patients’ medical history was usually unknown, but vaccination status was available for 12 patients: 7 had received ≥3 doses of diphtheria vaccine according to the vaccination schedule of France (6) and 5 were unvaccinated (the infant, 2 children, and 2 adults). All cutaneous infections occurred in patients with preexisting wounds. Eleven patients had chronic diphtheria infections (1–36 months) with...