



BAY OF PLENTY
DISTRICT HEALTH BOARD
HAUORA A TOI

OIA REQUEST

Received: 09 July 2021
Due: 06 August 2021
Response Date: 04 August 2021
Subject: Risk Factors of Raw Milk

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New Zealand
Phone 07 579 8000

In response to your request under the Official Information Act, please find our response below:

Request

Please keep in mind the main focus of this OIA is clarification of “*the medical evidence used*” in establishing that consumption of raw milk was either the cause of the illness, or the most likely cause of the illness.

Please redact any specific details that would be in breach of the privacy act, without compromising the requested information.

In a recent OIA (OIA19-0814) sent to Food Science and Risk Assessment, New Zealand Food Safety, the following paragraph was provided, regarding information from the EpiServ data base, and it's source data.

“In New Zealand the identification and investigation of diseases are the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and its agents. Information on cases of illness where raw drinking milk is identified as a risk factor is notified to MPI by District Health Boards (DHBs). MPI does not assess the medical evidence to establish that consuming raw milk was a risk factor in notified cases of illness but is advised by DHBs.”

Outbreak one:

This outbreak was identified with a “**report date**” 1 September 2014, causing illness (Campylobacter) to two people, aged 6 and 8 years. The comment provided regarding the source of the outbreak was “The family purchased raw milk; week prior to illness children had contact with animals”.

Outbreak two:

This outbreak was identified with a “**report date**” 18 August 2015, causing illness (Campylobacter) to four people, aged from 2 to 25 years. The comment provided regarding the source of the outbreak was “Household outbreak: Likely source was raw milk”.

For each of the above “outbreaks”, please provide the answers to the following questions.

Information sought.

1. What information was sought from the “cases”, themselves?
2. What information was sought from other sources, and what were these other sources?
3. What tests were used to establish that raw milk was the cause, or probable cause, of the illness?
4. What evidence did you rely on to ascertain that raw milk was the cause, or probable cause, of the illness?



5. What other foods did the “cases” consume that may have caused the illness?
6. What non-food sources were investigated as possible causes of the illness?
7. What other possible sources of the illness were investigated to ascertain that they were not the cause, or probable cause, of the illness?

An appendix attached to the MPI OIA19-0814, is attached, for your information.



Table showing raw milk related cases.pdf

Response

Outbreak One: Report date 01/09/2014

A review of the Episurv database and our files provided the following information for cases related to this outbreak. Two cases from same household notified as positive for campylobacter. All notified cases at Toi Te Ora investigated in accordance with the Ministry of Health’s Communicable Disease Control manual. Individual investigation of these cases the basis of the responses below.

1. ***What information was sought from the “cases”, themselves?***
No information would have been sought direct from the cases themselves due to their age at the time.
2. ***What information was sought from other sources, and what were these other sources?***
Phone interview with the cases’ parents.
3. ***What tests were used to establish that raw milk was the cause, or probable cause, of the illness?***
No physical testing of milk carried out by the public health unit. Note that it is unlikely any raw milk consumed during the incubation period would have been still been available for testing by the time of investigation.
4. ***What evidence did you rely on to ascertain that raw milk was the cause, or probable cause, of the illness?***
Consumption of raw milk products is a well-recognised risk factor for Campylobacteriosis.
5. ***What other foods did the “cases” consume that may have caused the illness?***
Investigation includes of food premises or sources of food consumed from outside the home
For Case J: Investigation report records “attended a potluck dinner at school on 12 August, consumed sushi made by friend and gluten free chicken dish Mum made and chicken drumsticks that someone else made and vegie’s”.
For case M: Investigation report records “May have eaten more at 12th Aug [REDACTED] [REDACTED] school potluck and family Birthday [REDACTED]”
6. ***What non-food sources were investigated as possible causes of the illness?***
Parents would have been asked about other risk factors relevant to the incubation period.
This routinely includes:
 - Source(s) of drinking water
 - Recreational water contact

- Human contact
- Animal contact
- travel

7. *What other possible sources of the illness were investigated to ascertain that they were not the cause, or probable cause, of the illness?*

Other risk factors would be asked about during the interview (see question 6). Other known cases of the same disease around the same time are then considered when deciding if these are a possible source of the illness.

Investigator reported contact with farm animals/things in cowshed was also a probable source of the illness.

Outbreak Two: Report Date 18 August 2015

A review of the EpiSurv database and our files provided the following information on cases related to this outbreak. Toi Te Ora Public Health received notification of one child positive for campylobacter, investigation of this case the initial basis of investigations, parent identified more case's siblings had similar symptoms, but these other family members were not notified as positive cases. All notified cases at Toi Te Ora investigated in accordance with the Ministry of Health's Communicable Disease Control manual, investigation of the notified case the basis of the responses below.

1. *What information was sought from the "cases", themselves?*

No information would have been sought direct from the case themselves due to their age at the time.

2. *What information was sought from other sources, and what were these other sources?*

Phone interview with the cases' parents.

3. *What tests were used to establish that raw milk was the cause, or probable cause, of the illness?*

No physical testing of milk carried out by the public health unit.

Note that it is unlikely any raw milk consumed during the incubation period would have been still been available for testing by the time of investigation.

4. *What evidence did you rely on to ascertain that raw milk was the cause, or probable cause, of the illness?*

Consumption of raw milk products is a well-recognised risk factor for Campylobacteriosis.

5. *What other foods did the "cases" consume that may have caused the illness?*

None recorded.

6. *What non-food sources were investigated as possible causes of the illness?*

Parents would have been asked about other risk factors relevant to the incubation period.

This includes:

- Source(s) of drinking water
- Recreational water contact
- Human contact
- Animal contact
- travel

7. What other possible sources of the illness were investigated to ascertain that they were not the cause, or probable cause, of the illness?

Other risk factors would be asked about during the interview (see question 6). Other known cases of the same disease around the same time are then considered when deciding if these are a possible source of the illness.

Investigator reported contact with calves at home was also a probable source of the illness.

Bay of Plenty DHB supports the open disclosure of information to assist the public understanding of how we are delivering publicly funded healthcare. This includes the proactive publication of anonymised Official Information Act responses on our website. Please note this response may be published on our website. [Official Information Act | Bay of Plenty District Health Board | Hauora a Toi | BOPDHB](#)

You have the right to request the Ombudsman investigate and review our response. www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'DOB', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

DEBBIE BROWN

Senior Advisor Governance and Quality