



Epidemiological Alert:

Weekly Update on the Cholera Situation

EW 4 (January 23 to January 29 2011)

(Published on 9 February 2011)

The purpose of this alert is to present the current epidemiological situation of the cholera outbreak in Haiti and the Dominican Republic updated as of epidemiological week (EW) 1, 2011. The information has been provided by the Ministère de la Santé Publique et de la Population (MSPP) of Haiti which compiles the data obtained by the different partners of the Health Cluster and the Ministry of Public Health of the Dominican Republic, respectively.

Haiti

Since the beginning of the cholera outbreak in the EW 42¹ (2010) as of EW 4, 2011, the MSPP registered a total of 216,276 cholera cases of which 55.3% (119,517) were hospitalized² and 1.9% died (global case-fatality rate).

New cases per week

During the EW 4 of 2011, there were 8,663 new registered cases including 97 fatal cases. In this week a decrease in the weekly incidence rate with respect to the previous week has appeared, from 13.6 to 8.1 cases per 10,000 inhabitants. Yet these data are preliminary and can vary as the database is revised.

All the departments registered new cholera cases during this week; however, only three departments (Artibonite, Grande Anse, Nord and Sud) reported an increase in the incidence rate during EW 4.

Summary

Haiti

During the fourth EW of 2011 Haiti registered a decrease in the weekly incidence rate at the national level, which went from 13.6 cholera cases per 10,000 inhabitants in EW 3 to 8.1 cases per 10,000 inhabitants in EW 4.

At department level, three departments (Artibonite, Grande Anse, Nord and Sud) increased their weekly incidence rate.

The in-hospital case fatality rate at the national level in EW 4 of 2011 was 1.0%.

Dominican Republic

The Ministry of Public Health informed that since EW 45 of 2010 to EW 4 of 2011, there were 336 cases confirmed by laboratory and one death that happened in EW 2.

¹ On October 20, 2010 the first cases of cholera (*V. cholerae* O: 1 serotype Ogawa) are confirmed by via laboratory testing in patients hospitalized in the department of Artibone.

² A case of cholera is defined as a patient with profuse, acute, watery diarrhea, in a resident of a department in which at least one case of cholera has been confirmed by laboratory. Hospitalized cases are when a patient is admitted to a health care facility (a hospital or cholera treatment center) during at least one night. A death due to cholera is the death of patient with the cholera disease that fulfills the cholera case definition. Any death that occurs in a health facility due to cholera, even if this person was admitted overnight or in the morning is considered a cholera hospital death.

Hospitalization trends and in-hospital case fatality rate

At the national level, there was an increase in the number of new hospitalizations of 2.0% when compared with registering in the previous week. All departments, in EW 4 registered new hospitalizations, with an increase between 11.5% and 0.9%. The largest increase in the number of hospitalizations when compared to the previous week was in Port-au-Prince and the departments of Sud Est, Grande Anse, Nord Est, Nippes and Centre.

The in-hospital case fatality rate at the national level (proportion of deaths among hospitalized patients due to cholera) reached 1.0%. In the EW 4, Port-au-Prince and the departments of Artibonite, Centre, Grande Anse, Nord Oest and Sud Est reduced their in-hospital case fatality rate to values below to 1%.

Global case fatality rate

At national level, the global case fatality rate of the cholera epidemic which is the total number of deaths registered divided by the total number of registered cases since the beginning of the epidemic to EW 4 was 1.9% (with a range that goes from 0.8% in Port-au-Prince to 8.3% in the department of Sud Est).

Dominican Republic

The Ministry of Public Health reported that up to EW 4 of 2011 there were 336 cholera cases confirmed by laboratory (191 in 2010 and 145 in the first four weeks of 2011), with one fatal case.

There have been registered cases and hospitalizations due to cholera in 21 of the 31 provinces of the country. The provinces where cases have been detected during the last two weeks are Azua, Elías Piña, La Altagracia, Monte Cristi, Pedernales, Santiago, Santo Domingo and Distrito Nacional. The provinces of El Siebo and La Romana registered cases for the first time during EW 4.

The cumulative incidence rate at the national level is of 3.4 cases per 100,000 inhabitants. The province of Elias Pina reported the highest accumulated incidence up to date with 100.3 cases per 100,000 inhabitants, followed by Independencia with 37.5 cases per 100, 000 inhabitants and Pedernales with 34.8 cases per 100,000 inhabitants.

The Ministry of Public Health is investigating the death of two children of 3 and 9 years of age, Haitian citizen that died inside a church in the community of El Javillar, of Puerto Plata, who tested positive for cholera. Because of cultural beliefs, the children were taken to a ceremony to be cured, and for this reason they did not receive medical care. As a part of the investigation, four other children were identified with symptoms of cholera. They were admitted to the hospital Ricardo Limardo and are currently recovering.

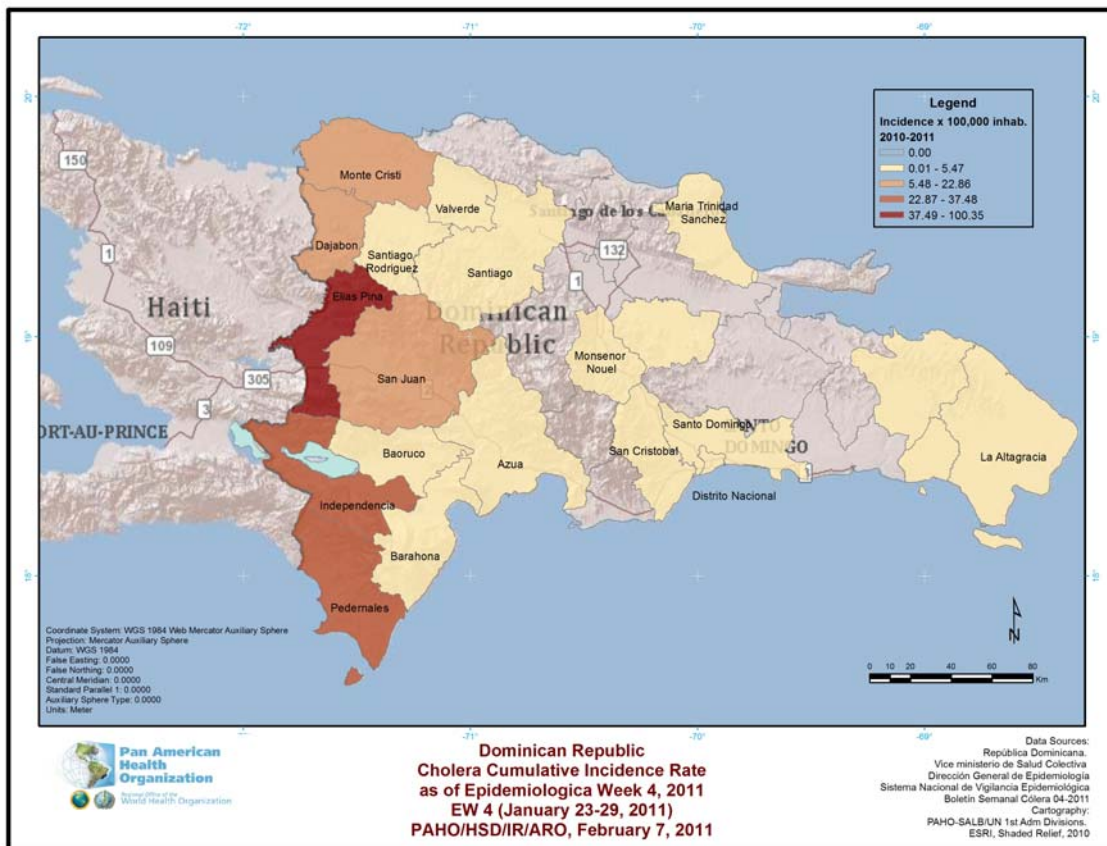
With respect to an outbreak registered among the guests at a social event that took place in the province of La Romana and is possibly related to contaminated food, the information available for the 9th of February is as follows:

- In the Dominican Republic, there were 32 suspected cholera cases identified, which include 22 Dominicans, 9 Venezuelans and one Spaniard. Of the 32 identified cases, samples were taken from 22 of them, and the presence of *V cholerae* was confirmed in 19 of them.
- In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, there were 245 people identified with the history of having participated in the wedding held in the Dominican Republic. Of the total identified cases, 89 showed symptoms compatible with cholera; of these 28 were hospitalized and 61 were treated on an ambulatory basis. All of the cases evolved favorably, no deaths were registered and no autochthonous were reported. A total of 58 samples were processed of which 38 (65%) resulted positive for *V cholerae* 01, *Serotype Ogawa*.

The preliminary results of the investigation of the outbreak indicate that the cholera outbreak was possibly caused by the consumption of foods contaminated during the cooking and/or preparation process and that were distributed to the guests of the gathering.

Recommendation

The Pan American Health Organization reiterates to Member States that they should reinforce the surveillance activity, update their preparation and response plans and implement the appropriate health prevention and promotion measures.



Technical Information on Cholera

The daily updates with respect to the number of cases, hospitalizations and fatalities due to cholera are published through the Interactive Cholera Map which can be found through the following link:

http://new.paho.org/hq/images/Atlas_IHR/CholeraHispaniola/atlas.htm

The report concerning the actions taken by the Health Assistance Group, at the national and department level can be found through the following link:

http://new.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4404&Itemid=3487

A complete selection of **technical guides and recommendations** about the **handling of cases, procedures for the identification of cases by laboratory** and **measures for the control of outbreaks in emergencies** is available at PAHO's website. They can also be accessed through the following links:

In English:

http://new.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=3119&Itemid=3467&lang=en

In Spanish:

http://new.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=3119&Itemid=3467&lang=es

In French:

http://new.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=3119&Itemid=3467&lang=fr