



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE
Thomas Farley, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner

2010 Advisory # 4

LAB ADVISORY: Bacterial Meningitis Investigation

1. NYC DOHMH and NYS Wadsworth Center will be conducting polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing on cases of culture negative meningitis to identify the etiologic agent
2. This investigation is to determine the frequency of culture negative bacterial meningitis due to a reportable disease
3. Please promptly report suspect and confirmed cases of bacterial meningitis regardless of culture results
4. Staff will be contacting hospital microbiology laboratories to arrange transport of spinal fluid samples and we request that you retain specimens for at least 7 days.

Previously distributed to Microbiology, Infectious Disease and Infection Control personnel

March 2, 2011

Dear Colleagues,

Meningitis caused by any bacteria is reportable in New York City. The NYC DOHMH is investigating culture negative cases of meningitis in order to detect unreported cases of *Neisseria meningitidis*, *Streptococcus pneumoniae* and *Haemophilus influenzae* and to define the utility of polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing and 16S rRNA gene sequencing in identifying bacterial pathogens in cerebrospinal fluid.

For the next 12-18 months DOHMH staff will be contacting the microbiology labs of NYC hospitals to obtain cerebrospinal fluid specimens on all patients reported to us with bacterial meningitis and a subset of those reported with aseptic meningitis. Specimens will be routed to the NYS Wadsworth Center through the NYC Public Health Laboratory.

Questions on the epidemiology investigation:

Don Weiss, MD, MPH: 212-227-5333

Laboratory questions:

Jennifer Rakeman, Ph.D. or Lillian Lee, MS 212-447-6783

Your cooperation in this investigation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Sara Beatrice

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