

Department of Disease Control

Weekly Disease Forecast No. 224_ *Streptococcus suis* Infection (25 - 31 August 2019)

From the national disease surveillance system, the Department of Disease Control (DDC) reveals 265 cases (23 died) of *Streptococcus suis* infection during 1 January to 17 August 2019. Most of the cases were the elderly male aged over 65 years old followed by the adult male aged over 45 years old. Occupations with the highest risk were farm workers and general labors. The disease were mostly found in the northern followed by the northeastern regions. Provinces with the highest cases were Uttaradit, Nakhonsawan, and Phrae respectively.

This year, there had been 60 clusters of *Streptococcus suis* infection. Deaths were found in 20 clusters.



According to this week disease forecast, *Streptococcus suis* infection tends to occur sporadically especially in the high risk regions due to a risky behavior of eating local favorite food, i.e. raw pork with fresh blood (Lahp-moo) and close contact with pigs with no proper personal protection.

Streptococcus suis infection, a zoonotic disease, is usually asymptomatic in pigs, but can result in septicemia, meningitis, pneumonia and arthritis. Humans can be infected by consumption of contaminated raw or under-cooked pork and fresh blood or direct contact with infected pigs or pork products through wounds on the skin. The incubation period ranges from a few hours up to five days. Symptoms include fever and meningitis (headache, vomiting, diarrhea, neck stiffness, intolerance of light, decreased level of consciousness, and hearing loss). Complications include arthritis, pneumonia, endocarditis, deafness, vertigo, ataxia, and skin lesion (hemorrhagic blebs). Severe illness, especially in patients with underlying diseases such as diabetes, heart diseases, hypertension, liver cirrhosis, and cancer, might result in death due to sepsis. Therefore, the history of raw pork consumption or close contact with pigs is helpful for life saving and risk reduction of deafness.

The DDC advises all to 1) avoid consumption of raw or under-cooked pork and fresh blood. Pork should be cooked to reach an internal temperature of 70°C, or until the juices are clear and not pink, 2) buy only fresh pork from reliable source, 3) those who prepare pork should be aware of the disease, if there is a wound on the hand, cover it properly with waterproof bandage or plastic gloves before handling raw pork, keep raw pork and ready-to-eat foods separately, never share the same knife and chopping board between raw and cooked foods, and wash hands thoroughly in between handling of raw and cooked foods, and 4) improve pig raising conditions and increase self-protection among farm workers including washing hands thoroughly after handling pigs.

For queries or additional information, please call DDC hotline 1422.



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