

本署檔號 Our Ref.: (23) in DH SEB CD/8/39/1

來函檔號 Your Ref.:

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5 July 2006

Dear Medical Superintendent of private hospital,

Vigilance against Noroviral gastroenteritis

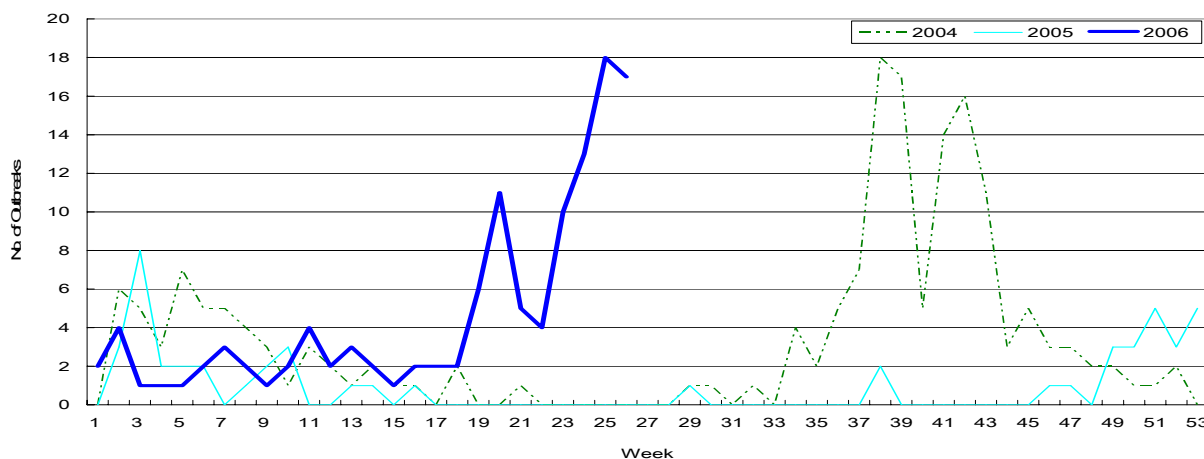
The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) detected an unusual increase in noroviral gastroenteritis outbreaks in recent months, and gene sequencing showed that these recent outbreaks were caused by the same norovirus variant which is different from the variants identified in previous years. To date, 125 noroviral gastroenteritis outbreaks (involving 1463 persons) have been reported in 2006; the majority of them occurred in elderly homes and hospitals. (Table 1 and Chart 1).

Table 1. No. of noroviral outbreaks in various settings in 2006 (as of 5 July 2006)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Total
Elderly home	5 (58)	4 (23)	5 (64)	5 (69)	21 (296)	35 (466)	2 (16)	77 (992)
Hospital	1 (7)	0 (0)	4 (48)	2 (26)	2 (10)	17 (137)	7 (45)	33 (273)
Primary/Secondary School	1 (12)	2 (67)	2 (64)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	5 (143)
Child care centre	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (4)
Other institution	0 (0)	1 (13)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (14)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (27)
Domestic setting	1 (3)	1 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (17)	1 (2)	0 (0)	7 (24)
Total	8 (80)	8 (105)	12 (180)	7 (95)	28 (337)	53 (605)	9 (61)	125 (1463)



Chart 1. No. of noroviral gastroenteritis outbreaks reported to CHP, 2004-2006 (as of 5 July 2006)



We would like to seek your assistance in advising your staff and patients to adhere to strict personal, food and environmental hygiene. In particular,

- wash hands thoroughly using liquid soap before handling food and eating and after using the toilet or handling vomitus or faeces;
- wear gloves when disposing of vomitus and faeces and wash hands afterwards;
- clean and disinfect contaminated areas or items promptly and thoroughly with household bleach diluted at a ratio 1 : 50 (by adding 1 part of household bleach to 49 parts of water);
- maintain good indoor ventilation;
- ensure all water closets are in proper function and toilet areas are regularly cleansed and disinfected
- ensure all food is adequately cooked especially seafood and shellfish

Staff with vomiting or diarrhoea should be advised to refrain from work until 48 hours after recovery. If you notice an increase in the number of patients or staff of your hospital with symptoms of acute gastroenteritis, please report the Central Notification Office of CHP as soon as possible via fax (2477 2770) or phone (2477 2772) during office hours, or call our Medical Control Officer (pager: 7116 3300 call 9179) outside office hours. CHP will provide advice in the management of such cases and control measures.

For more information on Norovirus, please visit the website of CHP at http://www.chp.gov.hk/content.asp?lang=en&info_id=33&id=24&pid=9 and the website of Hospital Authority at <http://www3.ha.org.hk/idctc/document/Norovirus.pdf>

Yours Sincerely,

(Dr. S K CHUANG)

for Consultant Community Medicine (Communicable Disease)
Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health