

Suspected *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* Dermatitis Associated with a Hotel Pool and Hot Tub

April

Otter Tail County

On April 20, 2012, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Acute Disease Investigation and Control Section received a phone call from a parent who had held a birthday party at a hotel in Fergus Falls on April 15. The caller reported that at least seven of nine party attendees had developed rashes after going in the hotel pool and whirlpool on April 15. Sanitarians from MDH Food, Pools, and Lodging Services (FPLS) were contacted on April 20, and an outbreak investigation was initiated.

The party organizer declined to provide MDH with contact information for party attendees; however, the party organizer did distribute MDH's contact information to the party attendees and ask that they call MDH. MDH staff interviewed party attendees about their illness and exposure histories.

MDH sanitarians conducted an onsite inspection of the swimming pool and hot tub facilities on April 20.

Seven (78%) of nine attendees reported developing rashes consistent with *Pseudomonas* dermatitis. No other symptoms were reported. Cases reported onset of illness 1 to 2 days after going in the swimming pool and hot tub at the hotel. Three (43%) cases were seen by a physician for their rash and were clinically diagnosed with hot tub folliculitis.

The birthday party was held from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. on April 15. All party attendees reported going in both the swimming pool and hot tub.

Upon inspection of the swimming pool and hot tub, both facilities were immediately closed. The swimming pool had total, free, and combined chlorine levels of 0. The hot tub had a free chlorine level of 0.4 ppm and a combined chlorine level of 0.2 ppm. None of these levels were within the state limits. Additionally, the facility lacked complete pool records and documentation and did not have a certified trained operator.

This was a waterborne outbreak of suspected *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* dermatitis associated with a hotel swimming pool and hot tub. The poor monitoring of disinfection levels by the pool operator was ultimately responsible for the outbreak.