

EPI Update for Friday, September 19, 2014 Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE) Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Epi working on Ebola returns from Sierra Leone**
- **2013 Iowa Surveillance of Notifiable and Other Diseases Report available**
- **Iowa Acute Disease Monthly Update**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Epi working on Ebola returns from Sierra Leone

Dr. Samir Koirala, an epidemiologist working with the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), recently returned from assisting CDC Ebola Outbreak efforts in Sierra Leone. He was based Ko District - one of the three most affected districts in the country. His work centered on improving their surveillance system.

"One of the many challenges in West Africa is a lack of patient tracing," said Dr. Koirala. "Far too many times a patient is tested in one district (an area similar to a county), and transferred to another district for treatment if the test is positive. In the transfer process some patients die; others die at the treatment center, and still others recover. Whatever the outcome, the patient's loved ones may not know what happened to the patient since paperwork does not always follow them from one facility to the next."

Koirala and his public health team implemented a patient database, trained people to use the database, and to do the data entry and data management. They also provided training to the contact tracers and their supervisors on best ways to do contact tracing, collecting information from contacts, and filling up the contact tracing forms and reporting them. He also assisted in finding missing people and worked at the national level to develop a system to keep track of each and every person in the count who was being transferred to the treatment centers.

According to Koirala, there are many challenges and issues in regards to the Ebola outbreak apart from a poor surveillance system:

- Poor healthcare system and infrastructures
- Inadequate treatment centers and diagnostic facilities
- Poor patient care
- Fear among healthcare workers and reluctance to treat Ebola patients
- Lack of trust between healthcare providers and communities
- Inadequate manpower and resources
- Fear among communities about seeking medical care
- Lack of knowledge and awareness about Ebola and lack of communication between hospitals/treatment centers and local people
- Stigma associated with Ebola, even after recovery

2013 Iowa Surveillance of Notifiable and Other Diseases Report available

The annual Iowa Surveillance of Notifiable and Other Diseases Report provides a yearly snapshot of what, how, and when events impact the public's health in our state. In 2013, more than 71,000 laboratory results of infectious diseases and conditions were submitted to IDPH disease surveillance programs. In general, the number of reported cases of vaccine-preventable diseases decreased when compared to the previous three-year average (2010-2012); however,

the number of reported Hepatitis A cases increased. For the complete report, visit <http://bit.ly/1uZMudv>.

Iowa Acute Disease Monthly Update

The new issue of the Iowa Acute Disease Monthly Update is available by visiting www.idph.state.ia.us/cade/ and scrolling down to 'Reports.' This month's issue can also be accessed directly at www.idph.state.ia.us/IDPHChannelsService/file.ashx?file=D909BA46-B283-4243-BC13-9FAE92BFE346.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

Registration is now open for the 15th Annual Iowa Public Health Practice Colloquium: Putting the Pieces Together: Leveraging Your Organization's Assets for Performance Improvement. Find program and registration information at cph.uiowa.edu/iphp/ and <http://training-source.org/url/qv>.

Have a healthy and happy week!

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