



## BOTULISM CASE REPORT SUMMARY LOS ANGELES COUNTY, 2013

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Four cases of botulism were reported in 2013 that met case definition (four probable, one confirmed). All cases survived. All four cases were wound botulism cases. All four had a history of injection drug use with heroin. One was confirmed by mouse bioassay on serum for toxin A performed by the Los Angeles County Public Health Laboratory and two were classified as probable cases by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Matrix-assisted laser desorption/ionization-Time of Flight (MALDI-TOF) test for toxin A in serum<sup>1</sup>. One case was classified as a probable case based on history and clinical criteria. This case had history of black tar heroin use and presented with respiratory failure and was intubated in the emergency room; serum and stool collected almost three weeks after symptom onset were negative for botulism toxin.

Two additional reports of suspected botulism did not meet case definitions for confirmation. One patient was thought to have Miller Fisher variant of Guillain-Barré syndrome or myasthenia gravis as symptoms improved, antitoxin was never administered, and serum was negative for botulism toxin. The other patient was an injection drug user who presented with a clinical picture similar to botulism. He received antitoxin and intravenous gamma globulin, serum was negative for botulism toxin.

The local health department's only responsibility for infant botulism is immediate telephone reporting of suspected cases to the California Department of Public Health's (CDPH) Division of Communicable Disease Control. All suspected cases are investigated by the CDPH [Infant Botulism Treatment and Prevention Program](#).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Barr JR, Moura H, Boyer AE, Woolfitt AR, Kalb SR, Pavlopoulos A, et al. Botulinum neurotoxin detection and differentiation by mass spectrometry. *Emerg Infect Dis.* 2005; 11 (10): 1578-1583

<sup>2</sup> Infant Botulism Treatment and Prevention Program. Division of Communicable Disease Control, California Department of Public Health. <http://www.infantbotulism.org/>.