

COMMUNITY-ACQUIRED DISEASE OUTBREAKS

ABSTRACT

- In 2000, of 196 reported community-acquired outbreaks investigated, 40 were foodborne (see Foodborne Outbreak section). The remaining 156 community outbreaks consisted of 1,420 illnesses.
- Settings of community-acquired outbreaks primarily include schools and group homes.

DATA

Disease outbreaks are defined as clusters of illness that occur in a similar time or place, or unusual numbers of disease cases above baseline in a specified area. Depending on the nature of the outbreak, investigation responsibility is held by either ACDC or by the district health office, with ACDC providing consultation. Figure 94 shows that, since 1997, the annual number of reported outbreaks has not varied as much as the number of cases involved in outbreaks.

Most of the reported community outbreaks in LAC were due to varicella (28%), and the ectoparasites, scabies and pediculosis (24%; (Figure 94).

Overall, pediculosis and gastroenteritis (GE) of undetermined etiology (generally defined as viral, non-laboratory confirmed) were the diseases with the highest number of cases. Also, GE illnesses of viral & undetermined etiology had the highest number of cases per outbreak (Table 9), followed by varicella and pediculosis. Pink eye, bacterial or viral conjunctivitis, received its own category this year.

The most common settings for outbreaks were elementary schools, accounting for 52%, and preschools, 30% (Figure 96).

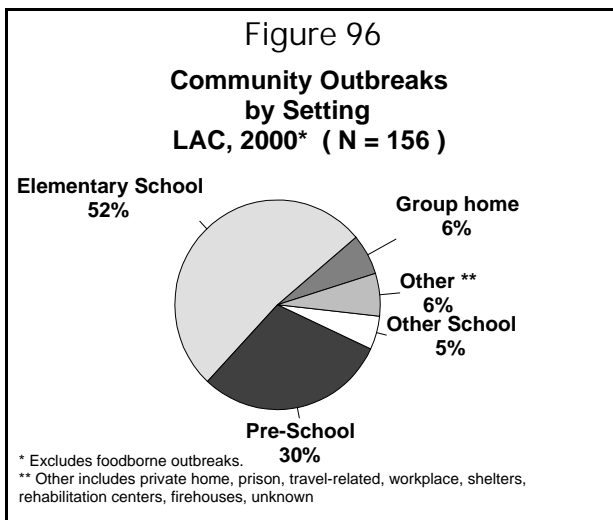
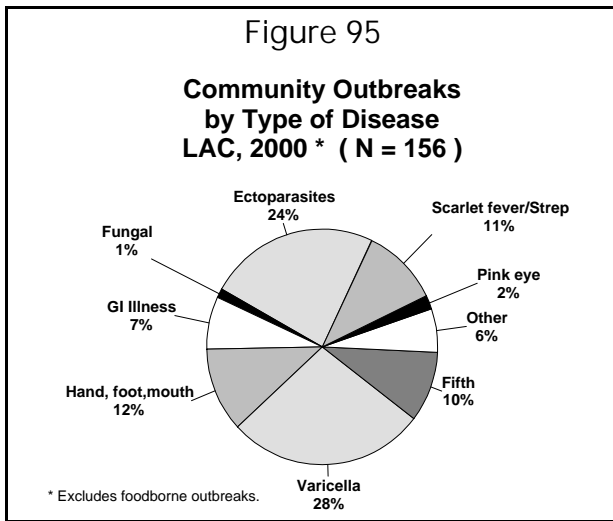
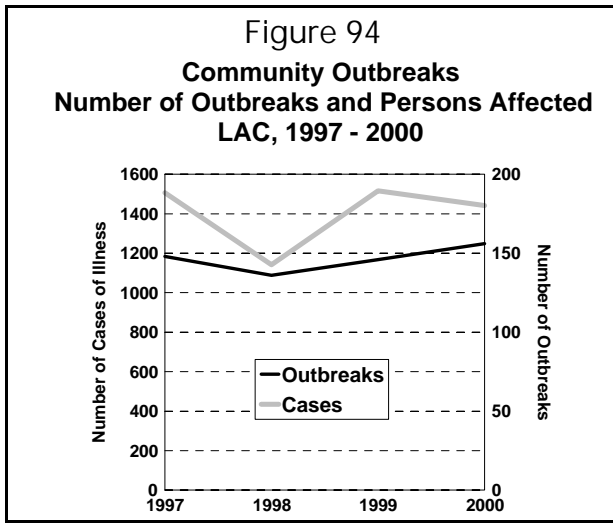


Table 9. Community Outbreaks by Disease Diagnosis, LAC–2000

Disease	Number of Outbreaks	Number of Cases	Avg. Cases per Outbreak	Range
Pediculosis	24	261	11	2 - 25
Scabies	13	97	7	2 - 24
Varicella	43	464	11	5 - 41
Hand, foot & mouth disease	18	166	9	2 - 47
Fungal diseases	2	6	3	2 - 4
GI illness - Viral GE ^a /undetermined	10	177	18	4 - 35
GI illness - <i>Shigella spp.</i>	2	14	7	4 - 10
Fifth disease	15	104	7	2 - 24
Scarlet Fever/Strep throat	17	77	5	2 - 11
Pink eye	3	23	8	5 - 10
Other ^b	9	31	3	2 - 6
Total	156	1,420	9	----

^a Excludes foodborne outbreaks.

^b Other includes Hepatitis A, impetigo, leptospirosis, mumps, pertussis, unknown rash, rubella and shingles.

Table 10. Community Outbreaks: Disease Diagnosis by Setting, LAC–2000

Disease	Group Home	Elementary School	Pre-School	Other School ^a	Other ^b	TOTAL
Pediculosis	2	16	6	0	0	24
Scabies	5	0	1	3	4	13
Varicella	0	33	7	3	0	43
Hand, foot & mouth disease	0	5	11	1	1	18
Fungal diseases	0	1	1	0	0	2
GI illness - Viral GE	0	1	5	0	1	7
GI illness - bacterial etiology	0	0	2	0	0	2
GI illness- unknown etiology	1	1	1	0	0	3
Fifth disease	1	13	1	0	0	15
Pink eye	0	1	2	0	0	3
Scarlet Fever/Strep throat	0	8	8	0	1	17
Other	1	2	2	1	3	9
Total	10	81	47	8	10	156

^a Includes senior high schools, middle schools, special ed., preschool/elementary schools, and elementary/middle schools.

^b Includes private homes, prison, shelter, travel-related, workplace, rehabilitation center, fire house, and unknown.

COMMENTS

In previous years, ectoparasites (pediculosis and scabies) were the predominant outbreak type reported in schools (41% in 1998). Varicella accounted for 27% of school outbreaks in 1998. In 1999, varicella (32%) surpassed ectoparasites (23%) as the leading outbreak type reported among schools. This change in varicella outbreaks among schools is seen again in 2000: varicella 40%, ectoparasites 21%. This increase in varicella may be the result of a campaign in the fall of 1999 and 2000 by DHS Immunization Program in which they distributed fliers to all elementary schools in LAC requesting varicella outbreak reports and providing instructions for reporting.