



UK Health
Security
Agency

Serial number 2024/038

Date 9 September 2024

Event: *Salmonella* Blockley 5-SNP cluster t5.57 in the UK

Notified by: Gastrointestinal Infections, Food Safety and One Health Division

Authorised by: Trish Mannes (RDD, UKHSA South East);
Gauri Godbole (Deputy Director GIFSOH)
Lesley Larkin (Deputy Director GIFSOH)
Richard Pebody (Director, Clinical & Emerging Infections),
UKHSA Comms
UKHSA SRD On Call

Contact: Epidemiology: salmonellasurv@ukhsa.gov.uk ,
Microbiology: GBRU@ukhsa.gov.uk

IRP Level: Routine response

Incident Lead: Dr Marie Anne Chattaway

Instructions for Cascade:

- UKHSA Private Office Groups who cascade within Groups
 - UKHSA Regions Directorate
 - UKHSA Field Services
 - UKHSA Health Protection Teams including UKHSA Regional Deputy Directors
 - Deputy Directors in Regions Directorate
 - UKHSA Lab Management Teams
 - UKHSA Regional Communications
 - Generic inbox for each of the devolved administrations
 - DHSC CMO (excluding internal UKHSA briefing notes)
 - National NHSE EPRR
 - **Devolved Administrations** to cascade to Medical Directors and other DA teams as appropriate to their local arrangements
 - **Regional Deputy Directors** to cascade to Directors of Public Health and Local Authority Environmental Health teams
 - **UKHSA microbiologists** to cascade to non-UKHSA labs (NHS labs and private)
 - **UKHSA microbiologists** to cascade to NHS Trust infection leads
 - **NHS labs/NHS infection leads/NHS microbiologist/NHS infectious disease specialists** to cascade appropriate clinical teams such as accident and emergency, acute medicine
-



Summary:

UKHSA, Public Health Scotland, Public Health Wales and Public Health Agency Northern Ireland, together with the Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland are investigating a 5-single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) cluster of *Salmonella* Blockley (SNP address: 1.1.2.2.39.57%) identified through the analysis of whole genome sequencing (WGS) data. The purpose of this communication is to ensure healthcare professionals are aware of the current increase in cases, the national level investigation into the t5:57 cluster and the guidance and recommendations for action.

Background and Interpretation:

As of 05 September 2024, a total of 54 cases have been reported of *Salmonella* Blockley ST52 5-SNP cluster: 1.1.2.2.39.57%. These have been identified in England (n=36), Wales (n=7) and Scotland (n=11), with sample dates ranging between 27 July 2024 and 24 August 2024. Notably, cases range in age from 2 years to 85 years (median 57 years). The age group most affected were those aged 50-59 years (n=13, 24.1%) and more males (57.4%) affected than females. There are early indications of greater than expected clinical severity of infection; 10/21(48%) cases with information report hospitalisation for their illness.

Antimicrobial resistance determinants predicted by WGS indicate reduced susceptibility to fluoroquinolones with some strains being fully resistant. There is no initial indication of a travel association. Genetically similar isolates of *S. Blockley* have been identified in one European country with possible cases identified in a second country and this being further investigated.

This may be indicative of an international supply chain. The source of the outbreak is currently unknown but case interviews are ongoing.

A national level routine response investigation has been initiated due to the number of cases, the apparent population at risk (predominantly older population >50y) and the indications of a potentially internationally distributed vehicle of infection. An Incident Management Team has been convened and the first meeting was held on 6 September 2024.

Implications & Recommendations for UKHSA Regions

UKHSA regional teams have been alerted to this outbreak and hypothesis generated questionnaires are being undertaken by the Rapid Investigation Team and Field Service colleagues from the East of England. Please send any enquiries to salmonellasurv@ukhsa.gov.uk

UKHSA regions are asked to share this briefing note as appropriate to their Local Authority Environmental Health Teams.



Implications & Recommendations for UKHSA sites and services

UKHSA sites and services should continue to report *Salmonella* results (including all serovars and subspecies) for national surveillance following normal procedures and should promptly refer samples to the Gastrointestinal Bacteria Reference Unit (GBRU) for confirmation and further characterisation (through WGS) as detailed below.

Food Water & Environment (FW&E) laboratories may be asked to examine food and environmental samples taken as part of the outbreak investigations.

Implications & Recommendations for NHS

Clinical laboratories should continue to promptly refer all isolates of *Salmonella* spp. to the Gastrointestinal Bacteria Reference Unit at Colindale for typing and confirmation. Standard slide agglutination panels should continue to be used as per local protocols.

Any enquiries regarding laboratory testing can be directed to GBRU@ukhsa.gov.uk

Implications and recommendations for Local Authorities

Local authority environmental health teams may also be asked to contact businesses to trace products if those businesses are in their area, or potentially undertake sampling in conjunction with UKHSA's FW&E official food samplers if a suspected vehicle is identified.
