DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
SURVEILLANCE UNIT
INCREASE IN CONJUNCTIVITIS

Overview

The Surveillance Unit has noticed a consistent increase in reports of conjunctivitis cases during the past four weeks. Cases have been presenting at multiple clinics in New Providence as well as cases noted in migrants from ladings in New Providence, Abaco and Eleuthera during rapid assessments conducted by public health staff. During the months of May through July there tends to be increase in cases over the past few years.

The last *outbreak* of conjunctivitis in The Bahamas occurred in 2003 with 6387 cases for an incidence rate of 2017/100,000.

Acute Conjunctivitis Incidence Rates, 2000-2009

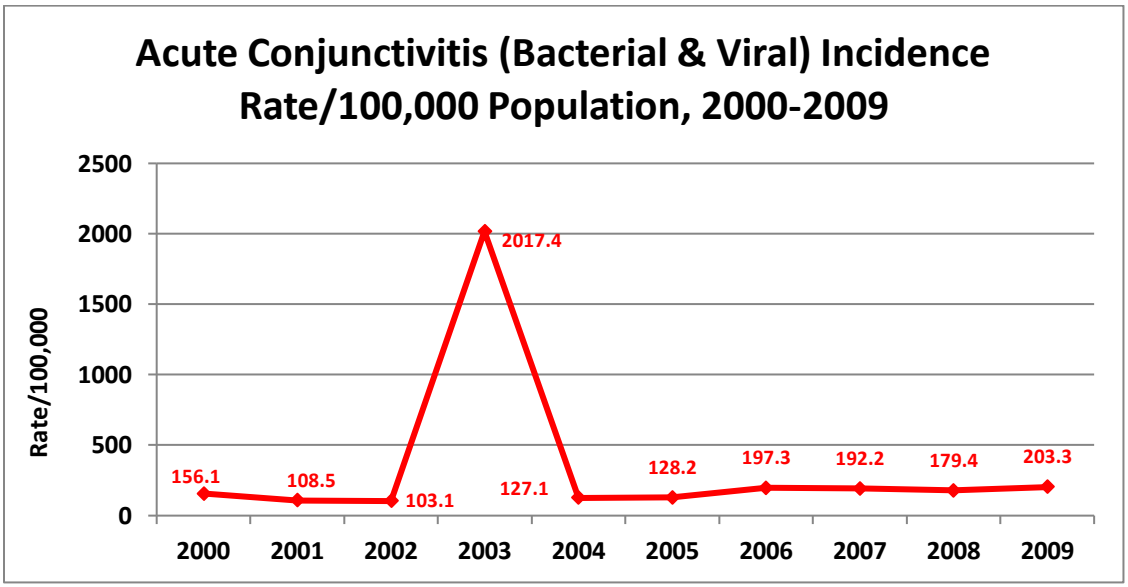

Table1: Total number conjunctivitis cases 2010 - 2016

YEARS	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
NUMBER OF CASES	513	342	185	325	374	588	895

Table 2: Conjunctivitis cases January – June 2016 vs 2017

MONTH	NUMBER OF CASES	
	2016	2017
January	55	24
February	48	28
March	78	46
April	89	34
May	97	101
June	90	139

Public Health Actions Taken

- All clients seen and assessed as conjunctivitis were treated
- Immigration personnel at the Detention Center were educated
- Public Health, Health Care Providers and School Health Nurses were advised of the increase and the anticipated outbreak along with what to expect. Health Education has commenced in the Public schools.
- Department of Public Health Pharmacy Supervisor was informed and advised to ensure that adequate medication was available for the general public. Additional medication received and distributed to clinics.
- Health Education Division was advised and asked to increase educational materials.
- Visits were made to Poly Clinics in New Providence for discussion with physicians and senior nurses. They were requested to collects specimens so as to identify specific agent Pamphlets were left along with the tool for data collection (line listings) and swabs for specimens.
- Public Service Announcement (PSA) prepared and forwarded for distribution to media houses
- Laboratory testing of samples taken ongoing. To date, swabs taken from patients presenting at clinics have been negative for bacterial causes.

Conjunctivitis is a reportable disease in The Bahamas (all health institutions are mandated to report cases to Department of Public Health). It is also reportable in the Region and as such Is included in the monthly country report that is submitted to Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA)