



Infection (news) report

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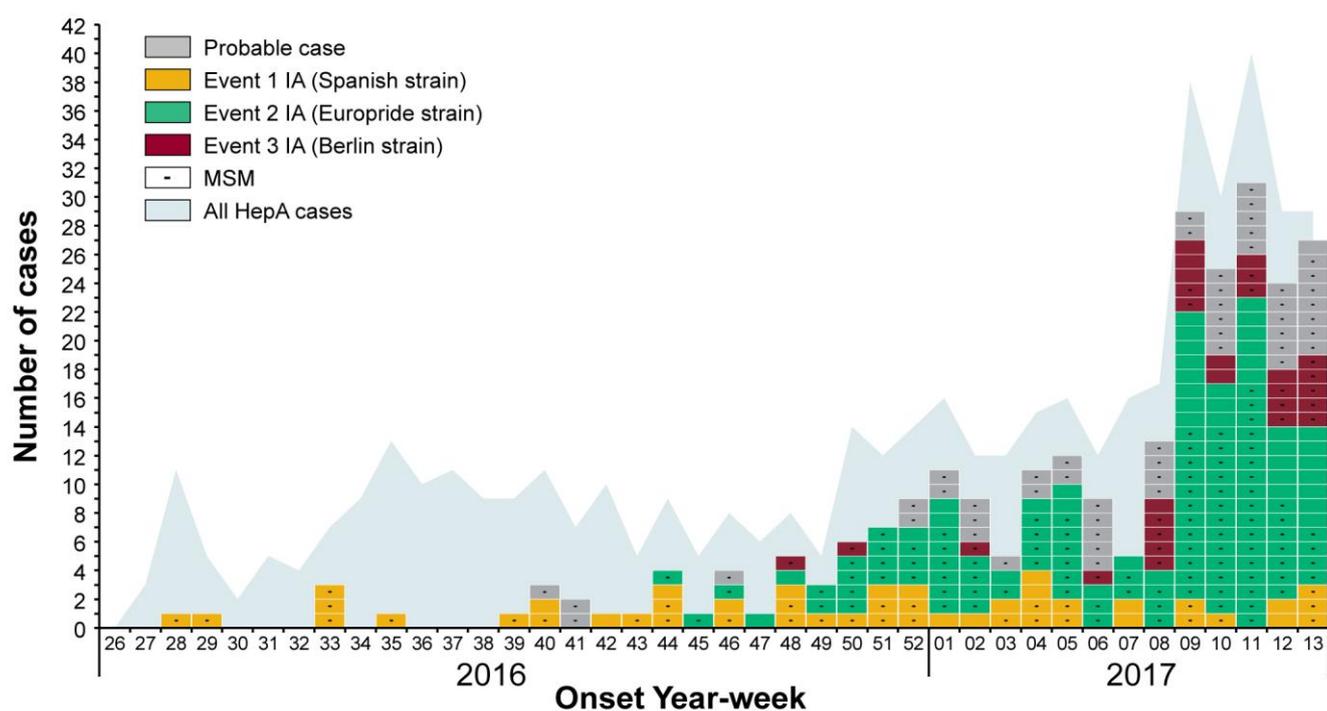
Hepatitis A outbreak in England under investigation

Public Health England is investigating a hepatitis A outbreak predominantly affecting men who have sex with men. Between July 2016 and 2 April 2017, 266 cases associated with the outbreak had been identified in England (see figure). At least 74% of these were among MSM, and 63% of cases were in London. There is evidence that there have been some cases in the wider population linked to the outbreak.

A high proportion of cases likely acquired the infection abroad at the beginning of the outbreak, but transmission now mainly occurs in England. The outbreak comprises three concurrently-circulating genotype 1a strains, previously not seen in England. Hepatitis A outbreaks caused by the same strains are concurrently occurring in 12 European countries and elsewhere in the UK outside of England [1,2].

As part of the outbreak response, PHE together with the British Association for Sexual health and HIV have recommended that MSM with one or more new or casual partners in the previous three months are opportunistically vaccinated in GUM clinics at their next appointment. In addition, pop-up vaccination clinics have been set up around gay venues in London. PHE is considering wider vaccination strategies to respond to this outbreak, which is occurring in the context of a global shortage of hepatitis A vaccine.

Hepatitis A cases, England: July 2016 to 2 April 2017



References

1. [Beebejaun K, Degala S, Balogun K, Simms I, Woodhall SC, Heinsbroek E, et al \(2017\). Outbreak of hepatitis A associated with men who have sex with men \(MSM\), England, July 2016 to January 2017. *Euro. Surveill.* **22**\(5\), 2 February.](#)
2. [ECDC Rapid Risk Assessment \(23 February 2017\). Hepatitis A outbreaks in the EU/EEA mostly affecting men who have sex with men.](#)