

CHP investigates fatal case of Streptococcus suis infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (June 19) investigating a fatal case of infection by Streptococcus suis. Streptococcus suis infection is a common disease among pigs while humans can be infected through direct contact with and exposure to infected pigs or other animals, uncooked pork and other pig products.

The female patient, aged 69 and with underlying illnesses, presented with fever since June 17. She attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Yan Chai Hospital and passed away on the same day.

Her blood culture grew Streptococcus suis upon laboratory testing.

Initial enquiries revealed that the patient had handled raw pork during the incubation period. She had no recent travel history and her home contact has remained asymptomatic.

A spokesman for the CHP explained that Streptococcus suis infection may present as meningitis, and less commonly sepsis, endocarditis, arthritis, bronchopneumonia and toxic shock syndrome. Streptococcus suis infection can be treated with appropriate antibiotics.

To prevent Streptococcus suis infection, members of the public are advised to always practise personal and environmental hygiene. They should avoid contact with pigs that are sick or dead from disease and their excreta or body fluids. If contact with pigs or raw pork is necessary, one should:

- * Use protective gloves;
- * Wash hands after handling pigs or raw pork; and
- * Disinfect and cover wounds properly.

Members of the public who suspect they may be infected should consult their doctors as soon as possible and report their relevant exposure history. They may visit the CHP's website (www.chp.gov.hk/en/healthtopics/content/24/3648.html) for more information on Streptococcus suis.