

Campylobacter and listeria infections still rising in the EU

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Human cases of listeriosis and campylobacteriosis rose once again in 2014, continuing an upward trend that began in 2008. Salmonellosis cases increased slightly for the first time since 2008. These are the main findings of the latest annual report by EFSA and ECDC on zoonoses and foodborne outbreaks in the European Union.

Listeriosis infections reported in humans increased by 16% compared with 2013: there were 2,161 confirmed cases in 2014. Although this number is relatively low, the rise of reported listeriosis cases is of concern as the surveillance of these infections is focused on severe forms of the disease, with higher death rates than for other food-borne

diseases, particularly among the elderly, and patients with a weak immune system. However, *Listeria monocytogenes*, the bacterium that causes listeriosis in humans and animals, seldom exceeded the legal safety limits in ready-to-eat foods – the most common foodborne source of [human](#) infections.

Campylobacteriosis remains the most commonly reported foodborne disease in the EU and has been so since 2005. The number of confirmed cases in the EU in 2014 was 236,851, an increase of 22,067 cases (10%), compared with 2013. The majority of EU Member States reported an increase in the number of campylobacteriosis cases in 2014, which could be partly explained by improvements in the surveillance system and/or improved diagnostics for [campylobacteriosis](#) in several Member States in recent years. In food, *Campylobacter* was mostly found in chicken meat.

Mike Catchpole, ECDC Chief Scientist said: "It is worrying that *Campylobacter* and *Listeria* infections are still rising in the European Union". He added: "this situation highlights the importance of enhancing listeriosis surveillance through molecular typing, work currently developed by ECDC and EFSA, and strengthening the *Campylobacter* control measures at EU level".

"All main actors in the food chain need to act together to improve monitoring at EU level. Such cooperation is crucial to reduce the burden of these two diseases in Europe," says Marta Hugas, Head of EFSA's Biological Hazards and Contaminants Unit.

In 2014, salmonellosis [cases](#) increased slightly for the first [time](#) over the period 2008-2014, partly due to changes in the number of Member States reporting. However, there has been a statistically significant downward trend of salmonellosis in the seven-year period of 2008–2014. This is mainly due to the successful *Salmonella* control programmes put

in place for poultry by EU Member States and the European Commission. The number of reported Salmonella outbreaks within the EU has decreased by 44% since 2008.

The EFSA-ECDC report covers 14 zoonoses and [foodborne outbreaks](#). It is based on data collected by 32 European countries (28 Member States and four non-Member States) and helps the European Commission and EU Member States to monitor, control and prevent zoonotic diseases.

More information: The European Union summary report on trends and sources of zoonoses, zoonotic agents and food-borne outbreaks in 2014: www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/4329

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