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| **California College of Midwives** | Legislative Fact Sheet with CitationsCalifornia Citizens for Health Freedom 888 / 557-8092 |
|      Hospital-related (Nosocomial) Maternity Mortality |

Bacteria probed in infant deaths ~ 15 Sep 1997 BOSTON, (UPI) -- Public health officials say a fast-killing and previously unknown strain of a common bacteria has killed four newborns in the neonatal intensive care unit at Children's Hospital in Boston.

Additional news broadcast on National Public Radio on this same story: Boston Children’s Hospital delivers approximately 600 babies every year. Four premature babies died over a 5 wk period of time from pseudomonas bacterial infection. The hospital closed its NICU for 4 months to eradicate the bacteria. **There are approximately 2 million infections every year in hospitalized patients, about 10% of which are caused by pseudomonas**.

Maternal death from strep infection after Elective Cesarean, 3 other new mothers with treated for invasive Group A strep infections

By BEN DOBBIN ROCHESTER, N.Y. (AP) - A hospital waited too long to diagnose and treat a woman who became infected with so-called "flesh-eating" [necrotizing fasciitis] bacteria and died 18 days after giving birth, health regulators said Friday. Strong Memorial Hospital failed to provide proper care for Susan Dougherty, who fell into a coma in the maternity ward two days after delivering a healthy girl on Feb. 17, said state Health Commissioner Barbara DeBuono.

Her department will waive an $8,000 fine if the hospital makes a series of changes in its medical procedures aimed at preventing such a recurrence. Strong [hospital] is a teaching institution connected to the University of Rochester. While it is not certain that any medical intervention could have saved Mrs. Dougherty's life, "the hospital failed to recognize the gravity of her condition and did not begin aggressive treatment soon enough," DeBuono said.

The hospital also was deficient in its care of one of two other women in the maternity ward who recovered from invasive Group A strep infections, health officials said in a 20-page report.

Mrs. Dougherty, 39, apparently developed the much **more dangerous strain of strep known as necrotizing fasciitis through her Caesarean incision**. Her severe postoperative pain wasn't recognized quickly enough as a symptom of the disease that rapidly poisons tissue. She died March 7.

Necrotizing fasciitis, which killed 11 people in England in 1994, responds to antibiotics if treated quickly but is fatal in about 30 percent of cases. The bacteria produce a toxin that poisons skin, muscle and internal organs. Tissue can be destroyed at the rate of an inch an hour.

Mrs. Dougherty's attending physician did not visit her the day after her Caesarean delivery, as required by state law, the health department said. "There is no question that I should have visited Susan sooner," said Dr. Stephan Sanko, her obstetrician for 10 years who also delivered her two other children. "I didn't make seeing her the priority it should have been because she seemed to be recovering well." Mrs. Dougherty's family is preparing to sue the hospital for damages.

In May, the health department said Strong (Hospital) acted promptly in **controlling the spread of the bacteria once it was detected in the maternity ward**. It is impossible to determine if the three maternity patients were infected by two maternity unit workers later found to be carrying invasive Group A strep, health officials said. *Copyright 1997, The Associated Press*

Maternal Death In Quebec from necrotizing fasciitis

Mothers awaiting test results after **25-year-old mother dies of infection following normal childbirth & a second diagnosed with Strep A** (a flesh-eating bacteria) by Katherine Wilton, The Gazette Canada

On Dec. 6, a 25-year-old woman, who had given birth to her third child three days earlier, died of an unknown illness. Her autopsy revealed that she had **streptococcus group A, the bacteria that causes the deterioration of flesh**. Her infant also tested positive for the disease, but survived after being treated with antibiotics.

On Thursday, another mother who had given birth at the hospital a few days earlier was readmitted after suffering from the disease's major symptoms, including a high fever, a sore throat and severe abdominal pain. Doctors stopped the progression of the bacteria with massive doses of antibiotics. The woman is still under observation at the hospital. Her child has not tested positive for the bacteria, but is being kept under observation at the hospital.

About 100 Quebecers get the flesh-eating disease every year, and about 15 die. The rare disease known medically as **necrotizing fasciitis** forced the amputation of Premier Lucien Bouchard's left leg in 1994. The disease is caused by a particularly vicious strain of the common streptococcal A bacteria, known in milder forms as the bug that gives you strep throat. In 1996 and 1997, six cases of flesh-eating disease have been reported on Montreal Island, two of them fatal. Last month, it killed a 29-year-old Montreal man. In that case, the bacteria is believed to have entered his body through a wound caused by an ingrown toenail.

**Mothers awaiting test results**: Thirty-five mothers who gave birth at a Saint-J�r�me hospital this month will learn tomorrow morning whether they or their babies have been infected with the bacteria that triggers the so-called flesh-eating disease. Officials at H�tel Dieu hospital tested the mothers, the babies and 80 hospital employees on Friday and Saturday, after a 25-year-old mother died of the disease and a second was diagnosed with the bacteria. "We plan to call the mothers Tuesday morning and let them know if the tests are positive or negative," said Lysianne Langevin, a nurse at the hospital. "Anyone who tests positive will be given antibiotics and then sent home."

The hospital closed its obstetrics ward on Friday at noon. It reopened yesterday at 8 a.m. because staff who were given antibiotics on Friday needed 24 hours to become immunized against the bacteria. Three women scheduled to give birth at the H�tel Dieu during the weekend were transferred to a hospital in Sainte-Eustache. When the ward was reopened yesterday morning, three expectant mothers were admitted. "As you can see, it is very quiet here today," said one nurse, as she and three of her colleagues chatted at the nurses' station. "But we are certainly getting a lot of calls from people with questions." On Saturday, the ward was packed with the 35 mothers and babies born at the hospital between Dec. 3 and Dec. 12. They were being tested for signs of the bacteria. "We decided to test them as a precaution, because we had two instances in a short period of time," Langevin said.

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