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**Health Information Update**

Source: WHO, Event Information Site for IHR National Focal  
Event Updates: **28 February 2019**

Event Updated	Country	Hazard	Disease	Event Description	IHR Assessment
2019-02-28	Argentina	Infectious	Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome	<p>On 19 December 2018, the Argentina Ministry of Health and Social Development issued an epidemiological alert regarding an increase in HPS cases in Epuyén, Chubut Province. Chubut Province is located in Patagonia in southern Argentina, and Epuyén has a population of approximately 2,000 persons. Between epidemiological week (EW) 44 of 2018 and EW 6 of 2019, there have been a total of 34 laboratory-confirmed cases of HPS, including 11 deaths, in Epuyén (epicenter) and surrounding towns (El Maitén, Trevelin) in Chubut Province, and El Bolsón in Rio Negro province and one case from Palena Province in Chile. The presumed index case had environmental exposure prior to symptom onset on 2 November. This case attended a party in Epuyén on 3 November 2018, and between 20-27 November 2018, 5 additional cases who attended the party had symptom onset. Between 7 December 2018 and 9 February 2019, an additional 28 cases had symptom onset, all of whom were epidemiologically-linked to previously confirmed cases. One of the confirmed cases was reported in a Chilean healthcare worker who resides in Palena Province, Los Lagos Region, Chile, and had symptom onset on 2 January 2019; this case was a close contact of a confirmed case from Epuyén who traveled to Chile while she was in her prodromal phase.</p> <p>Since 30 December 2018 until 10 February 2019, a total of 157 asymptomatic contacts have been identified in the Chubut province and El Bolsón (Rio Negro province) in whom the selective respiratory isolation strategy was applied. As of 25 February, 23 persons are under observation, and will finish the isolation period between 2 March and 22 March. Since 5 February there are no new cases reported and currently there is no patients related with this outbreak hospitalized.</p> <p>In Argentina, four endemic regions have been identified: North (Salta, Jujuy), Centro (Buenos Aires, Santa Fe, and Entre Ríos), Northeast (Misiones) and Sur (Neuquén, Río Negro, and Chubut). Between 2013 and 2018, an average of 100 confirmed cases were registered annually, with the provinces of Buenos Aires, Salta, and Jujuy having the highest number. Between 2013 and 2018, 111 confirmed deaths from hantavirus were reported in Argentina, with a case-fatality rate of 18.6%, though this figure was close to 40% for some provinces in the southern region of the country. In Epuyén, Chubut Province, a total of 5 cases were reported in the last 10 years prior to the current outbreak.</p> <p>In Chile, the confirmed case in the Palena resident is the first confirmed case of hantavirus in Los Lagos Region in 2019. During 2018, there were 8 cases of hantavirus, including 2 deaths.</p> <p>PAHO/WHO recommends that Member States continue efforts of detection, investigation, reporting, and case management for the prevention and control of infections caused by hantavirus. The potential for human-to-human transmission should be considered in areas where Andes virus is endemic. Given the type of transmission, in that case (with Andes virus) droplet precautions should be used in addition to standard protection.</p>	Public Health Risk (PHR)

\*A public health risk is something that is (or is likely to be) hazardous to human health or could contribute to a disease or an infectious condition in humans.