



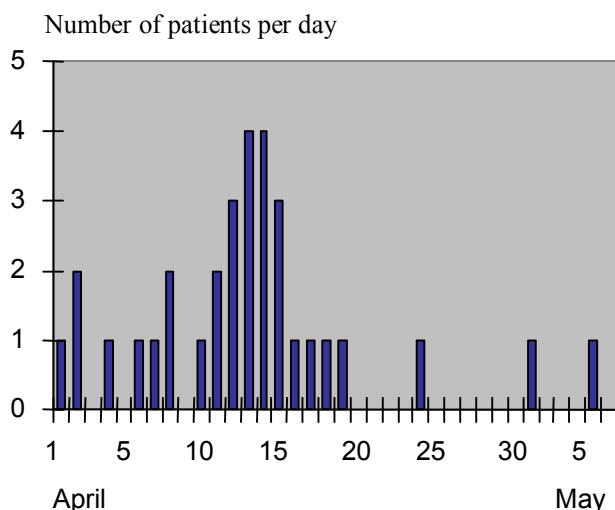
Salmonella outbreak in Italy

In spring 2004, *Salmonella* Typhimurium phage type DT104a was isolated from 22 children, which were admitted to the 'Bambino Gesù Paediatric Hospital' in Rome. This phage type had never been isolated yet in Italy.

An epidemiological investigation into the cause of the infection was started on 24 July and continued until 6 September 2004. Following are the main results of the epidemiological investigation.

- **Extent of the outbreak.** Via the Italian 'Enter-net' reporting system, in total 63 cases were diagnosed between 1 April and 5 May 2004. Sixty patients were residents of Rome and surrounding towns. The mean age of the patients was 7.5 years;
- **Patient-control study.** Twenty six patients were compared with 63 control persons, matching the patients in gender, age and residence. Of the investigated risk factors, consumption of 'Corallina' salami was most strongly associated with illness. Of the 26 interrogated patients, 14 indicated to have eaten 'Corallina' salami, compared with 16 of the 63 control persons.
- **Epidemic curve** The epidemic curve, which shows the number of new patients per day, is presented in figure 1. The curve is an example of a so called 'continuous' outbreak. This kind of curve shows that the incriminated food is still on the market.
- **Remainders of food products.** No remainders of the incriminated food product were left. However, two months prior to the outbreak, *S. Typhimurium* of the same phage type was isolated from a pig in Northern Italy during a routine veterinary control. DNA-analysis revealed that this strain was identical to the isolates from the patients. It proved impossible to trace the infected pig after the animal had been slaughtered.

Figure 1. Course of the outbreak of *S. Typhimurium* infection, showing the number of new patients per day



Conclusions: The epidemiologic curve, the long duration of the outbreak and the geographical distribution of the cases, all indicate that the source of infection was a product with a long shelf life that has been in the market for quite a long time. Salami fulfils these conditions.

Source:

<http://www.eurosurveillance.org/em/v12n04.1204-226.asp>