

01-421

disease prevention news

## The Public Health Impact of Arthritis in Texas: Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System 1999 Survey Results

*Although arthritis cripples a large number of persons each year, it kills relatively few. There is no other group of diseases which causes so much suffering by so many for so long. Because of their tendency to cripple without killing, arthritis and rheumatism are very important chronic diseases from the standpoint of social and economic magnitude.<sup>2</sup> This article summarizes the Texas Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System report, Arthritis 1999 Survey Data.*

**A**rthritis, which literally means joint inflammation, encompasses a family of over 100 rheumatic diseases. In modern medical usage, rheumatism refers to any of a variety of disorders marked by inflammation, degeneration, or metabolic derangement of the connective tissue structures of the body and cause pain.<sup>1</sup> These disorders can affect not only the joints but other connective tissues of the body including important supporting structures such as muscles, tendons, and ligaments, as well as the protective coverings of some internal organs. Rheumatism confined to the joints is classified as arthritis.

The Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) of the Texas Department of Health (TDH) conducted a 1999 survey to determine the public health impact of arthritis in Texas. The Texas BRFSS, initiated in 1987, is a federally funded telephone survey of 1500 randomly selected adult Texans. Conducted on a monthly basis, the survey collects data on lifestyle risk factors contributing to the leading causes of death and chronic diseases. Since the BRFSS is used nationwide, comparisons can be made with other states' results and with national data.

The Texas BRFSS uses a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system for respondent interviews. CDC provides a core survey of about 75 questions and standard modules to which individual states can make additions. A contractor forwards monthly data to the Texas BRFSS Coordinator to edit for out-of-range values and errors. Corrections are made before the data are sent to CDC for final edit checks, weighting, and tabulation. The annual data tables are sent to the

Texas BRFSS program and reports are prepared for distribution.

The Texas Risk Factor Report periodically publishes yearly BRFSS data to provide timely and in-depth analyses of chronic disease risk factors. The following highlights are taken from the most current *Texas Risk Factor Report, Arthritis, 1999 Survey Data*, available online at <http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/chronicd/>.

Approximately 3.1 million (21%) Texans aged  $\geq 18$  self-reported arthritis during 1999. The prevalence of arthritis increased with increasing age of respondents. Of persons who had chronic joint symptoms, more than 5 of every 10 respondents aged  $\geq 65$  (55%) had been told by their doctors that they had arthritis. Among persons who had chronic joint symptoms, 1.5 million (31%) Texas residents reported that the condition limited their activity. The proportion of activity limitation associated with arthritis was highest (42%) among persons  $\geq 65$ .

The proportion of women who reported having arthritis was higher than that of men. An estimated 1.9 million (26%) women reported arthritis, compared with 1.2 million (17%) men. The prevalence rates for arthritis were significantly higher for non-Hispanic whites (26%) and African Americans (21%) than for Hispanics (14%) and other races (14%).

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## Health Behaviors and Arthritis

### Health Status

Adult Texans with arthritis rated their general health as follows: excellent, 8.8%; very good, 21.9%; and good 32.9%. In contrast, 23.7% of those without arthritis rated their health as excellent, 32.9% as very good, and 38.1% as good.

### Obesity

Almost 3 of 10 (28%) adult Texans with arthritis indicated that they were obese based on self-reported heights and weights. In contrast, only 2 of 10 (20%) of persons without arthritis reported obesity.

### Immunizations

The proportion of respondents who had received an influenza shot in the past 12 months was higher among persons with

arthritis (49.5%) than among those without (25.2%). Almost one-third (32.2%) of Texans with arthritis reported ever having a pneumococcal vaccination, while 67.8% of respondents with arthritis stated that they had not received this preventive measure.



### References

1. Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary, Edition 28. Philadelphia: WB Saunders Co. 1994.
2. Arthritis, Rheumatic Diseases, and Related disorders. 1992 Research Highlights. US DHHS NIH Publication no. 92-3413, January 1992.

## Meningitis Outbreaks in Public Health Region 6/5 South

From October 1, 2000, to January 31, 2001, PHR 6/5 South has identified 40 confirmed cases of meningococcal disease, with 5 fatalities (Harris-1, Jefferson-1, Liberty -1, Montgomery-2, ). Twenty-five of the 40 were serogroup C; 10 of these were part of 2 community-based outbreaks and a campus cluster. One community outbreak has involved children under 15 who live in or near New Caney and Porter, and a second, persons 1- to 70-years old with Conroe addresses. The cluster comprised 2 cases at a 9th grade/ high school campus in Humble. Mass vaccination of all 3 at-risk populations occurred from January 20 through February 1, 2001. Recent monthly case totals for Public Health Region 6/5S are

as follows: October-9, November-4, December-10, and January-20.

In each outbreak, the recommendation for vaccination was made after confirmation of an attack rate of  $\geq 10/100,000$  population of *Neisseria meningitidis* serogroup C within a 3-month period. The decision to recommend vaccination of the at-risk population was made in consent by local, regional, state, and federal public health officials.

On Saturday, January 20, 2001, 8,200 residents of the New Caney/Porter area aged 2 to 24 years were vaccinated. The 3-month serogroup C attack rate for this

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### Region 6/5S Meningococcal Illnesses Since 10/1/2000

County	Population (1,000s)*	Cases	Deaths
Austin	21,000	1	0
Brazoria	225,000	1	0
Chambers	21,000	1	0
Fort Bend	333,000	2	0
Galveston	235,000	1	0
Harris	3,320,000	17	0
Jefferson	235,000	1	1
Liberty	60,000	3	1
Montgomery	241,000	12	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,691,000</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>4</b>

\*Population data source: TAMU TX State Data Center (8/98)

## Bimonthly Statistical Summary of Selected Reportable Diseases: Provisional Cumulative Data

*Jan-Dec 2000*

Selected Diseases/Conditions	HHSC Region											Selected Texas Counties								Cumulative(1)	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Bexar	Dallas	El Paso	Harris	Hidalgo	Nueces	Tarrant	Travis	1999	2000
<b>Sexually Transmitted Diseases(2)</b>																					
Syphilis, primary and secondary	2	4	127	14	21	97	22	75	1	6	15	68	90	6	67	5	1	22	8	460	384
Congenital Syphilis	1	0	8	2	3	28	0	5	0	2	12	4	5	2	24	5	0	3	0	92	61
Resistant Neisseria gonorrhoeae	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1
<b>Enteric Diseases</b>																					
Salmonellosis	173	56	509	114	72	285	331	333	54	93	284	169	211	90	116	108	47	124	139	2304	2196
Shigellosis	115	9	373	50	76	302	441	483	18	53	401	345	181	53	88	89	95	137	158	2321	2281
Hepatitis A	95	21	413	94	23	240	272	152	24	29	118	112	213	28	156	70	4	56	127	1484	2511
Campylobacteriosis	100	10	151	19	26	86	246	170	21	6	133	132	96	6	34	44	29	17	137	968	1152
<b>Bacterial Infections</b>																					
H. influenzae type b, invasive	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	3
Meningococcal, invasive	2	0	12	5	2	18	6	5	0	3	1	4	6	3	11	1	0	4	6	54	106
Lyme disease	0	5	15	3	2	1	4	6	0	0	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	4	1	36	72
Vibrio species	3	1	6	0	0	10	4	5	0	1	4	4	2	1	9	0	0	3	3	34	38
<b>Other Conditions</b>																					
AIDS(4)	77	18	868	83	76	779	258	190	35	76	116	164	590	75	668	45	34	185	167	2859	2703
Hepatitis B	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	864	381
Adult elevated blood lead levels	1	2	1451	66	32	80	9	35	1	11	6	6	734	11	61	0	0	51	3	1369	1694
Animal rabies - total	25	74	287	28	2	61	160	44	64	16	25	10	1	5	19	3	5	44	21	400	786
Animal rabies - dogs and cats	5	2	7	2	0	1	8	2	8	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	34	35
<b>Tuberculosis Disease(4)</b>																					
Children (0-14 years)	5	0	8	0	1	20	5	0	1	1	9	0	2	1	17	4	0	5	1	80	50
Adults (>14 years)	10	9	155	25	10	271	59	64	8	23	107	41	100	22	233	37	15	41	34	1188	748
<b>Injuries(2)</b>																					
Spinal Cord Injuries (5)	43	25	244	40	32	89	120	55	22	83	83	29	66	53	38	13	40	67	22	458	966

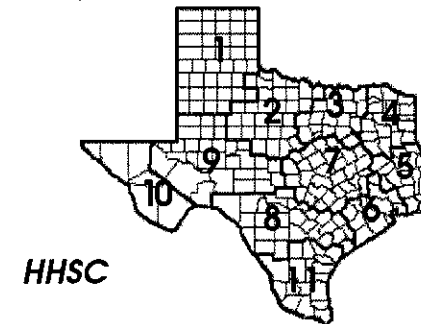
1. Cumulative to this month. 2. Data for the STD's, Tuberculosis, and spinal cord injuries are provided by date of report, rather than date of onset. 3. Voluntary reporting. 4. AIDS + TB totals include reported cases from Texas Department of Corrections, which are not included in the regional and county totals. 5. 6 reports were missing PHR identification.

### Call 1-800-705-8868 to report

1997 POPULATION ESTIMATES

1997 HHSC REGIONS					
1	764,497	4	957,383	7	1,931,454
2	533,392	5	687,951	8	2,017,179
3	5,104,222	6	4,404,421	9	555,363
<b>STATEWIDE TOTAL</b>		19,307,387			

SELECTED COUNTIES			
<b>Bexar</b>	1,324,190	<b>Hidalgo</b>	492,619
<b>Dallas</b>	2,099,876	<b>Nueces</b>	311,154
<b>El Paso</b>	715,807	<b>Tarrant</b>	1,427,664
<b>Harris</b>	3,163,342	<b>Travis</b>	632,922





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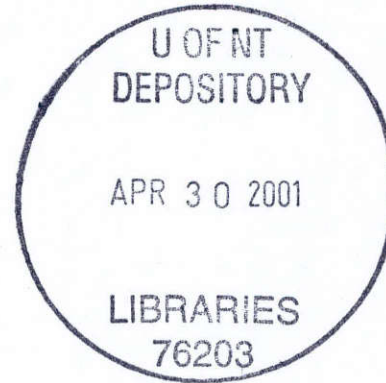
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population was approximately 50/100,000. Planning and implementation of this vaccination effort took place within 48 hours. The attack rate for the Conroe area was 10/100,000. Montgomery County Health Department concluded an 8-day campaign to vaccinate the target population on February 1, 2001. Over 60,000 doses of vaccine were administered. The attack rate for the Humble campus was 50/100,000. From January 23 through 25, Harris County Health Department vaccinated approximately 4,000 students and staff of the Humble high school and adjacent 9th grade campus.

The entire region is being closely monitored. Large expenditures of resources have been made to meet the challenges of vaccinating the at-risk populations. TDH has operated a toll-free hotline for 2 weeks, which has answered over 13,000 calls. Thousands more have been received at the local and regional levels. Additional information on meningococcal disease and the outbreaks may be found at the following TDH website: <http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/tdhtoday/meningitis.htm>

**Vaccine-Preventable Disease Update  
 Reported Cases with Onset From 11/01/00 - 12/31/00**

Condition	County	Number of Cases	Date of Onset	Condition	County	Date of Cases	Date of Onset
Mumps	Dallas	1	11/11	Pertussis	Tom Green	1	11/9
		1	11/29			1	11/10
Pertussis	Hidalgo	1	11/1	Tetanus	Hidalgo	1	11/21
		1	11/3			1	11/14
		1	11/01				
<b>YTD</b>		<b>Mumps</b>	<b>Pertussis</b>	<b>Rubella</b>	<b>Tetanus</b>		
		23	251	6	3		