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Epidemiology of Autochthonous West Nil Virus Infections in Lower Saxony in 2024

Inhalt

West Nile virus (WNV) is a mosquito-borne arbovirus causing West Nile fever (WNF) or neuroinvasive disease (WNND). WNV infections are notifiable according to the infection protection law. From May through November 30 there is mandatory screening of blood donors (BDs) for WNV in Germany.

In 2024 eight cases (5 BDs, 2 WNV, 1 WNND) of suspected WNV cases were reported to the local Public Health authorities; Thereof three cases were confirmed as autochthonous. Two of the reported WNV cases had been abroad. One BD was not confirmed. Two BDs were confirmed with Usutuvirus whereas two were confirmed with WNV clade II. Both WNV-positive BDs, from two different counties did not recall any symptoms prior to blood donation nor did they report any travel history outside Lower Saxony (LS) for the time period of 21 days prior to blood donation. After confirmation of the first WNV-positive BD in early September the public was informed by press release. Investigation of the WNND case revealed that the person contracted the infection in Lower Saxony. All three autochthonous WNV cases lived in or in the vicinity of counties where WNV-infections had been diagnosed among horses and birds prior or at the time of infection in 2024.

The occurrence of WNV cases in LS indicates that WNV circulates in *Culex* spp. populations in Lower Saxony. Awareness needs to be raised among the public towards preventive measures e.g. prevention of mosquito bites as well as eliminating breeding sites for mosquitoes.

Keywords

West Nil Virus, Usutuvirus, blood donor, emerging pathogen

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Professional Status of the Speaker

Senior Scientist

Junior Scientist Status

No, I am not a Junior Scientist.

Track Klassifizierung: Emerging Pathogens

Typ des Beitrags: Both options possible