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Salmonella Bochum outbreak in children caused by chocolate hazelnut spread, Germany 2026

Tuesday, October 6, 2026 2:30 PM (15 minutes)

In February 2026, the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) identified an outbreak in Germany caused by the rare *Salmonella* (*S.*) *enterica* subspecies *enterica* serovar Bochum. Descriptive epidemiology and exploratory patient interviews were performed. The RKI compared outbreak cases (n=12) and participants from the RKI panel "Health in Germany"aged 2–15 years (n=197) regarding consumption of chocolate hazelnut spreads in the 3 days before symptom onset or completing the questionnaire. Findings were shared with food safety authorities, prompting on-site inspections and food sample analyses. The outbreak involved 42 cases; predominantly children in eastern Germany. More males than females were affected (64 % *vs.* 36 %). The National Reference Center assigned all isolates with sequence data (n=27) to the same genomic cluster by cgMLST analysis. In exploratory patient interviews 12 of 14 cases (86 %) stated consumption of a specific brand of chocolate hazelnut spread. The case-control-study confirmed a strong association between consumption and being a case (odds ratio: 93 [95% confidence interval: 21-663]). Genome analysis proved the presence of the outbreak strain and other serovars in the product. In April 2026, the implicated product was recalled and the outbreak stopped. Trustful collaboration and rapid communication of findings between infection control and food safety authorities enabled fast identification of the infection vehicle and initiation of control measures.

Keywords

foodborne outbreak; salmonella; cgMLST

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Professional Status of the Speaker

Senior Scientist

Junior Scientist Status

No, I am not a Junior Scientist.

Authors: MEINEN, Anika (Robert Koch Institute, Department for Infectious Disease Epidemiology, Berlin, Germany); BUCK, Hanna (-Robert Koch Institute, Department for Infectious Disease Epidemiology, Berlin, Germany); PIETSCH, Michael (Robert Koch Institute, Department for Infectious Diseases, Wernigerode, Germany); SPIEKER, Clara (Robert Koch Institute, Department for Infectious Disease Epidemiology, Berlin, Germany); SIMON, Sandra (Robert Koch Institute, Department for Infectious Diseases, Wernigerode, Germany); FISCHER, Jennie (German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment, National Reference Laboratory for Salmonella, Berlin, Germany); LAMPARTER, Marina C. (German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment, National Reference Laboratory for Salmonella, Berlin, Germany); ROSNER, Bettina (Robert Koch Institute, Department for Infectious Disease Epidemiology, Berlin, Germany)

Presenter: MEINEN, Anika (Robert Koch Institute, Department for Infectious Disease Epidemiology, Berlin, Germany)

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