Outbreak of botulism in France

07 Sep 2011

On 05 September, the French health authorities reported two clusters of botulism with a total of eight people affected: the first cluster (five cases) occurred in the district of Vaucluse in southern France, while the second cluster (three cases) was reported from the district of Somme in northern France.

All cases have consumed "tapenade" (food product based on ground olives), produced in the Vaucluse under the brand name "Les Délices de Marie-Claire", batch number 112005. This product is distributed in four districts in southern France (i.e. Bouches-du-Rhône, Drome, Var and Vaucluse), and is available in food delicatessen stores since 31 May 2011 with a best before date of 16 December 2012. The French authorities have issued a national recall of all products produced by the implicated producer, and have informed the public health authorities of all European Member States.

Tourists who may have purchased this product while staying in France, are advised not to consume it.

Botulism is a serious paralytic illness caused by a toxin produced by the bacterium Clostridium botulinum. It may occur after eating foods containing the toxin or due to anaerobic germination of the spores within the intestine or within wounds. In food-borne botulism, paralytic symptoms generally appear after an incubation period of 12–36 hours (up to several days) after the ingestion of the toxin-containing food.

More information about botulism on ECDC website

More information about this event is available on the French official websites:

- Préfecture du Vaucluse
- Agence Régionale de Sante

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