Outbreak Report template – Infection Prevention in Practice

The recommended format is:

Up to 2500 words, to include up to five figures or tables.

250 word limit for the structured abstract.

Maximum of 20 references.

Please remember that the readership of IPIP is international: try to avoid terminology that is peculiarly British, and where this is unavoidable provide clarification (e.g. use ‘hospital’ or ‘hospital Trust’ rather than just ‘Trust’).

The template below is intended as a guide to outbreak reporting in IPIP. Not all sections will be relevant to all outbreak reports, but authors are encouraged to follow this structure when preparing their reports.

Introduction

This should be short (maximum 2 paragraphs), and should provide:

- A brief outline of existing knowledge of the organism or infection that caused the outbreak
- An indication about what is novel in the report
- A final statement of the aim(s) of the report (1-2 sentences)

Methods

Healthcare setting and affected patient population

Provide a brief description of the healthcare setting where the outbreak took place, and how an outbreak came to be suspected. This may include:

- Who: population affected
- Where: location / place / setting. Include description of baseline infection prevention measures
- What: how did an outbreak come to be suspected? (may include a brief description of the clinical presentation)
- When: time of onset
- Why: suspected or known aetiology or risk factors

Laboratory methods

Describe specimen type(s), laboratory methods, further typing (if employed), and environmental sampling if undertaken (including methodology and laboratory processing).

Analytical methods
Case definition
This may include clinical features, laboratory diagnoses, time, and place.

Case finding methods
Source and mode of data gathering (clinical software, laboratory information systems, notes review etc.).

Study-design and rationale
If a study design was used (i.e. retrospective cohort, case control) then please give details.

Statistical analysis
Where appropriate.

Results

The outbreak
Summary description including:
- Overall number of cases
- Epidemic curve
- Clinical features (colonisation vs infection, infective syndrome)
- Demographic characteristics of cases

The following may also be included as relevant:
- Response rates
- Attack rate

Laboratory findings
- Numbers of clinical &/or environmental samples tested and found positive
- Typing results

Hypothesis generation
- May include source of outbreak, mode of transmission
- May be tested in analytic studies

Infection prevention interventions
- Describe the interventions and the dates they were implemented
- It may be appropriate to report how uptake of interventions was monitored

Outcome
- Describe how it was determined that the outbreak had terminated

Analytical study results (if performed/available)
Discussion

Discussion of main results
Discuss the findings of the study in the context of the existing literature.

Comment on study validity
- Strengths
- Limitations of study design
- Possible biases (selection, confounding, information) should be discussed

Recommendations, actions
- Recommendations for prevention/control measures-based findings.
- Recommendations for future studies

Conclusions
Please provide a concluding paragraph summarising the key messages from the report.