



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE
Mary T. Bassett, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner

2017 ALERT # 13

Outbreak of Nontuberculous Mycobacterium Infections following Cosmetic Surgery Performed in the Dominican Republic

Eight Cases Reported in New York City

- An outbreak of *Mycobacterium abscessus/chelonae* infections associated with cosmetic surgery performed in the Dominican Republic has been identified, including 8 cases in New York City and 2 in Connecticut.
- Please report to the Health Department any suspect cases of nontuberculous *Mycobacterium* skin and soft tissue infections in patients who report recent cosmetic procedures in the Dominican Republic.

Please Share this Alert with All Primary Care, Family Medicine, Emergency Medicine, Internal Medicine, Infectious Disease, General and Plastic Surgery, Dermatology, Laboratory Medicine (including Mycobacteriology Laboratory staff) and Infection Control Staff in Your Facility

June 22, 2017

Dear Colleagues,

The New York City (NYC) Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) is investigating a cluster of nontuberculous *Mycobacterium* (NTM) infections following cosmetic surgery procedures (also known as “lipotourism”) performed in the Dominican Republic. The initial 3 cases included 1 patient from NYC, and 2 from Connecticut, who all underwent cosmetic surgical procedures at Centro Internacional de Cirugia Estetica (CIPLA) in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic on March 13, 2017. Seven additional cases in NYC residents have thus far been identified with 6 undergoing procedures at CIPLA.

All NYC patients are women with ages ranging from 28 to 39 years. All report having undergone elective cosmetic surgery procedures, including liposuction, abdominoplasty, and breast lifts or reduction, in the Dominican Republic in March and April 2017. Symptoms and findings have included abdominal abscesses, pain, wound discharge, and fever. No deaths have occurred. Six wound cultures have been positive for *Mycobacterium abscessus/chelonae*, 1 was positive for *Mycobacterium massiliense*, and 1 is pending. Both Connecticut residents have been positive for *Mycobacterium abscessus/chelonae*. Treatment has included hospitalization, surgical debridement, and several week courses of intravenous antibiotics.

Outbreaks of NTM infections associated with cosmetic surgery in the Dominican Republic have occurred in the past and have been reported here:



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Brief Report: Nontuberculous Mycobacterial Infections After Cosmetic Surgery --- Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 2003--2004

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5323a4.htm>

Notes from the Field: Rapidly Growing Nontuberculous *Mycobacterium* Wound Infections Among Medical Tourists Undergoing Cosmetic Surgeries in the Dominican Republic — Multiple States, March 2013–February 2014

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6309a5.htm>

To assist the investigation, we request that providers:

- 1) Review records and report patients with cellulitis, soft tissue infection, or cutaneous abscess in which NTM was identified (including *M. abscessus*, *M. chelonae*, *M. massiliense* and *M. fortuitum*) or whose wound specimens were acid fast smear positive only (since January 1, 2017). Physicians should inquire about previous surgical procedures in these patients and obtain NTM cultures whenever possible;
- 2) Suspect NTM in newly presenting patients or in those who have not responded to standard antibiotic treatment with cellulitis, soft tissue infection, or cutaneous abscess post cosmetic procedures regardless of the culture results. In such patients, we recommend alerting your microbiology laboratory that you suspect mycobacteria.

Please report all cases meeting the above criteria to the Health Department at **1-866-692-3641**. Available isolates will be sent to the NYC Public Health Laboratory for identification and to the NYS Wadsworth Center Laboratory for antibiotic susceptibilities and molecular characterization.

We greatly appreciate your assistance in helping us identify and respond to communicable disease concerns in NYC.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don Weiss".

Don Weiss, MD, MPH
Director of Surveillance
Bureau of Communicable Disease