



Special Edition

Epi Update for Monday, October 25, 2021

**Office of the Public Health Medical Director
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)**

Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

CDC HAN: Source implicated in fatal case in Georgia - Multistate outbreak of non-travel associated *Burkholderia pseudomallei* infections (melioidosis) in four patients: Georgia, Kansas, Minnesota, and Texas – 2021

Testing at CDC has identified the bacterial DNA of *Burkholderia pseudomallei* in an aromatherapy room spray in the home of the Georgia resident who was infected with and died from *Burkholderia pseudomallei* infection (melioidosis) in July 2021. This Georgia patient was the fourth melioidosis case in a cluster since March 2021 that involved three other patients in Kansas, Minnesota, and Texas.

Based on genomic analysis, the four cases in Georgia, Kansas, Minnesota, and Texas in 2021 closely match, indicating they all most likely share a common source of exposure. Genomic analysis of the four patient isolates grouped closely with strains from South Asia. None of these cases had a history of traveling outside of the continental United States. The four cases include both children and adults; two are female, and two are male. The first case, which was fatal, was identified in March 2021 in Kansas. The second and third cases, identified in May 2021 in Minnesota and Texas, were hospitalized for extended periods before being discharged to transitional care facilities. The most recent case this July, in Georgia, involved a patient who died in the hospital. Post-mortem testing in late July 2021 identified melioidosis as a cause of death. Symptoms of melioidosis are varied and nonspecific, and may include pneumonia, abscess formation, blood infections, and neurological involvement. Due to its nonspecific symptoms, melioidosis can initially be mistaken for other diseases such as tuberculosis, which can delay proper treatment. *Burkholderia pseudomallei* may also be misidentified by some automated identification methods in laboratory settings.

The contaminated product identified by positive polymerase chain reaction (PCR) assay is the *Better Homes and Gardens-branded Essential Oil Infused Aromatherapy Room Spray with Gemstones “Lavender & Chamomile”* scent, manufactured in India. The spray was sold at Walmart between February and October 21, 2021, and was distributed in a limited number of stores and online nationwide. Whole genome sequencing results from the positive product sample are pending. This product was removed from stores and online marketplaces on October 21, 2021, and out of abundance of caution, the five other scents under the same brand were removed from Walmart marketplaces as well (Lemon & Mandarin, Lavender, Peppermint, Lime & Eucalyptus, and Sandalwood & Vanilla). Testing will be conducted on these additional scents as well. Recalls are being initiated by the Consumer Product Safety

Commission and Walmart. CDC is working with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, the Texas Department of State Health Services, the Minnesota Department of Health, the Georgia Department of Public Health, and federal partners to learn whether the other patients used the implicated product and if other products need to be further investigated. This investigation and response are ongoing, and CDC will share more information as it becomes available.

To view the full HAN, visit emergency.cdc.gov/han/2021/han00455.asp.

Note: It is currently unclear whether the product was sold in Iowa stores; however, the product was available for nationwide purchase online. No Melioidosis cases have been identified in Iowa to date. Healthcare Providers can contact their local health department or CADE (at 800-362-2736) with questions.