Campylobacter to blame for most foodborne infections in Denmark

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Campylobacter	4,677
Salmonella	1,074
Yersinia	576
VTEC	269
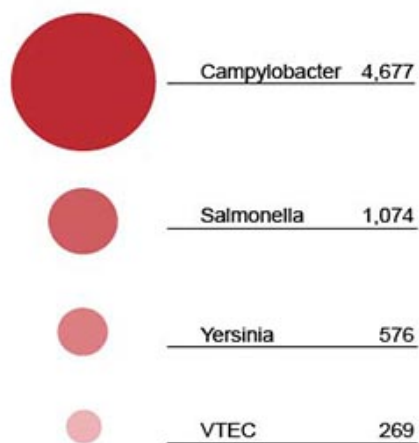
Campylobacter is to blame for more than 4,600 foodborne infections in Denmark and is thus still the most common cause of foodborne disease. This is one of the findings of the annual report for 2016 on the incidence of diseases that can be transmitted from animals and food to humans. The report was prepared by the National Food Institute, Technical University of Denmark, in cooperation with Statens Serum Institut – the national institute of public health – and the Danish Veterinary and Food

Administration. Researchers, government agencies and industry are considering initiatives that can lead to the bacteria making fewer Danes fall ill.

Every year, Danes fall ill from food they eat. Accounting for more than 4,677 registered cases of illness in 2016, campylobacter continues to be the leading cause of foodborne infections in Denmark. This represents an increase of more than 7% from 2015. However, the increase may be due to the fact that more sensitive diagnostic methods are being used.

In 2016, four times as many Danes fell ill with a campylobacter infection than a salmonella infection.

Working together to fight campylobacter

Researchers, authorities and industry in Denmark have long worked together to collect data and to develop methods with the intention of reducing the risk of Danes falling ill with a campylobacter infection.

"Based on the Danish experience with virtually eradicating salmonella in broilers and eggs produced in Denmark, researchers, authorities and the industry have joined forces to figure out how we ensure that fewer people fall ill to campylobacter," says senior scientific officer Birgitte Helwigh from the National Food Institute.

Salmonella often an unwanted souvenir

In 2016 a total of 1,074 salmonella infections have been reported among Danes. As in previous years, travel abroad is the main cause associated with these infections. More than half of the infections (55%) are travel-related, and people most often bring the infection back from Thailand (19%), Turkey (13%) and Spain (5%).

The report's salmonella source account estimates which sources have caused salmonella infection in Danes. Of the 1,074 infections, domestically produced pork is estimated to be the food source, which is the main cause of infections in 2016. A total of 6% of all cases are estimated to be caused by Danish pork, closely followed by imported chicken and pork (4% and 3.7% respectively).

Disease outbreaks know no borders

A [salmonella outbreak](#) in salami sticks, which caused nine Danish children to become ill, was solved in 2016 because the Swedish authorities notified the Danish authorities. In the same year, Denmark was part of an international investigation of a salmonella [outbreak](#) in Polish eggs, and a smaller – but unusual – outbreak, where several people fell ill with a [salmonella](#) infection from their pet snakes.

"In Europe we have an alarm system, where we warn each other if we discover an outbreak of disease or suspect that a particular food is making people ill," epidemiologist Luise Müller from Statens Serum Institut explains.

"Because [foodborne disease](#) outbreaks know no borders, and foods are produced and sold to many countries at the same time, international cooperation is important if we are to find the sources of infection and stop outbreaks in time," Luise Müller adds.

More information: [www.food.dtu.dk/english/-/medi …016-FINAL.ashx?la=da](#)

Provided by Technical University of Denmark