

Notifications of Meningococcal Disease

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Meningococcal disease is most common in children under five years, although people of any age can be affected.
- The number of meningococcal disease notifications in New Zealand has dropped to 46 cases in 2014, from 68 in 2013.
- The highest rates of meningococcal disease are among those aged less than one year, Māori and Pacific peoples
- The rate of meningococcal disease (1.0 per 100,000 population) in 2014 is the lowest since 1997.



Source: Ministry of Health, 2013.

Meningococcal disease is most common in children under five years

Meningococcal disease can affect anyone, but is more common in children under age five, as well as teenagers and young adults. Factors such as living in overcrowded housing can increase the risk of developing meningococcal diseases (Ministry of Health, 2011).

Meningococcal bacteria are difficult to catch as they don't live for very long outside of the body. They pass from one person to another through secretions from the nose or throat, for example by coughing, sneezing or kissing, but it usually needs to be close, prolonged contact (Ministry of Health, 2014).

People need to be alert to the signs of meningococcal disease because it can come on very quickly. Meningococcal disease can be difficult to diagnose because it can look like other illnesses. Meningococcal disease can be treated with antibiotics but early treatment is essential (Ministry of Health, 2014).

The number of meningococcal disease notifications in New Zealand has dropped by almost one third from 2013 to 2014

The number of meningococcal disease notifications in New Zealand has declined by almost one third from 68 cases in 2013 to 46 in 2014 (Table 1). Except for the age group 1-4 years, the notifications of meningococcal disease in each age group have dropped during 2013-2014.

Table 1: Number of meningococcal disease notifications in New Zealand, 2013-2014.

Age group	2013	2014	Change %
<1 year	11	6	-45 ↓
1-4 years	13	15	15 ↑
5-9 years	4	1	-75 ↓
10-14 years	5	0	-100 ↓
15-19 years	12	3	-75 ↓
20+ years	23	21	-9 ↓
Total	68	46	-32 ↓

Source: ESR (2014), ESR (2015)

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The rate of meningococcal disease in 2014 is the lowest since 1997

From 2008 to 2014, the highest rate of meningococcal disease in New Zealand was among those aged less than one year, followed by those aged 1-4 years (Figure 1).

The rates of meningococcal disease among Māori and Pacific peoples decreased from 2008 to 2014. However, in comparison to all New Zealanders, the rates of meningococcal disease in Māori and Pacific peoples were more than double the national rate (Figure 2).

In the past 18 years, the notification rate of meningococcal disease in New Zealand has fallen from a peak of 16.7 per 100,000 population in 2001 to 1.0 per 100,000 population in 2014 (Figure 3).

Figure 1: Meningococcal disease notification rates by age group, 2008-2014

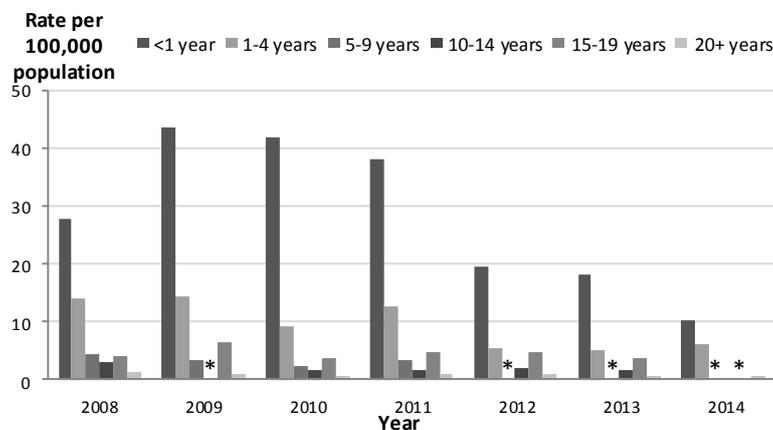


Figure 2: Meningococcal disease notification rates by ethnicity, 2008-2014

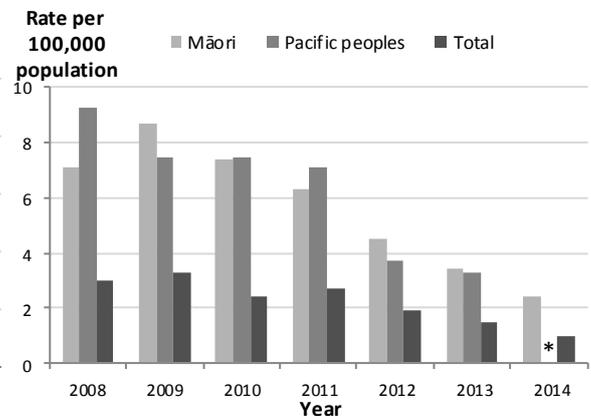
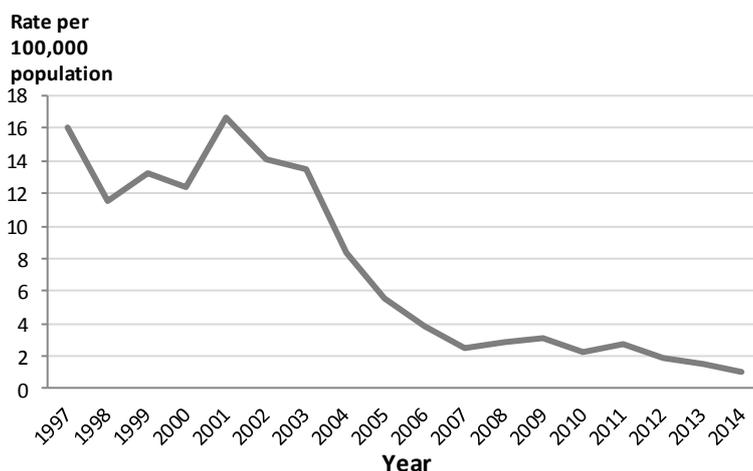


Figure 3: Meningococcal disease notification rate, 1997-2014



*Rate is not calculated as the category has fewer than five notified cases.

Source of Figure 1 ,2, 3:

ESR (2009-2015), Statistics New Zealand (2015)

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