

Investigation for an Outbreak of Norovirus Dysentery and Emesis among Teachers and Students at a Juvenile Development Center in Taipei City

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In October 2006, a juvenile development center located in Taipei City has reported a total of 9 cases of dysentery and emesis to the local City Health Department. The health department responded by sending a health inspect team to the center and collected 5 fresh stool specimens for diagnostic examinations. The results were all positive for Norovirus. An epidemiological inspection by the team revealed that all the reported cases were pupils or teachers of the school, and all of them have been taking the same school bus. Most recent outbreaks of Norovirus infection were found to be mainly to be direct contact transmission. However, this current event might be an exception with evidence suggesting that the virus could be transmitted from one the case's vomitus exposed in the air in a closed school bus environment and hence passed on the people inside the bus. This incidence demonstrated that apart from those obvious institutions such as

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elderly centers, nursing homes, and hospital wards, school campus should also be monitored more closely as potential sites for Norovirus transmission. It particularly applies to classrooms and school buses where it is more closed spaced and also because students usually keep closer distances to one another than adults might do in those places. Therefore, whenever dealing with diarrhea and vomiting in school children, caution should be taken to try to disperse students as soon as possible and at the same time, keep the place well ventilated. Protected measures should be done properly by wearing facial mask and gloves before having any physical contact with the case or doing cleanup tasks. Furthermore, it's mandatory for the infected individual to go home for quarantine until 5-7 days after the symptoms have subsided completely to return to school or work. Such measure is the only effective way to stop further transmissions and the spread of the virus, and also to prevent sporadic campus Norovirus infections outbreaks.