

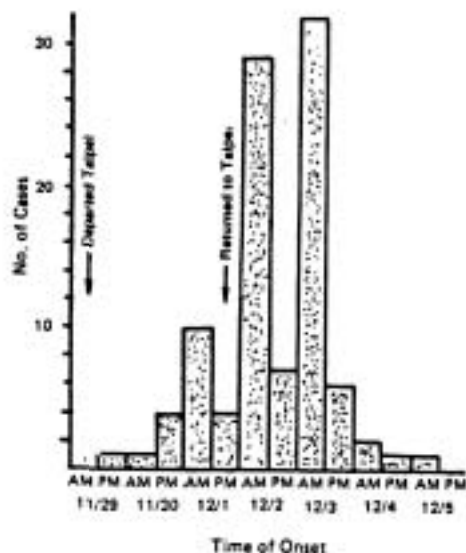
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Outbreak of Gastroenteritis Among A Tour Group of Junior High School Students – Taipei

On December 7, 1984, the Bureau of Disease Control received a report of an outbreak of gastroenteritis among a group of junior high school students traveling on a tour from Taipei City to central Taiwan. The group, consisting of 1,162 students and 45 teachers, departed Taipei the morning of November 29th traveling by chartered bus to Hualien and Taichung returning to Taipei on the afternoon of December 1st. Students first became ill the evening of November 30th, and new cases continued to occur until December 5th (figure 1). A total of 123 cases were identified for an attack rate of 10.2%. The

Figure 1. Cases of gastroenteritis (n=123) among a junior high school student tour group by time of onset; November 29 to December 5, 1984, Taipei, Taiwan.



attack rate among males (12.9%) and females (6.6%) was significantly different ($p < .001$). Symptoms included diarrhea (76%), vomiting (64%), abdominal cramps (63%), and fever (28%). The illness was generally mild and lasted from 1-2 days. No persons required hospitalization.

Editorial note: Outbreaks of gastroenteritis are caused by a variety of bacterial, viral, and parasitic organisms. The temporal clustering of cases in this outbreak suggests a common source exposure, although some person-to-person spread could have occurred accounting for some cases with onset after the group returned to Taipei. It is likely that the causative organism was one with a long incubation period (48-72 hours). Both *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* species have incubation periods in this range and produce clinical symptoms similar to those described in this outbreak. The marked difference in attack rates for males and females is presently unexplained. A case-control study and laboratory investigation are underway to determine the cause of this outbreak so public health officials can find ways to prevent similar outbreaks in the future.

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To strengthen the surveillance system and enrich the content of the Bulletin, we welcome accounts of interesting cases, outbreaks, environmental hazards, or other public health problems of current interest. Those reports should be addressed to: the Editor, Epidemiology Bulletin, Bureau of Disease Control, Department of Health, Executive Yuan, Republic of China. P.O. Box 81-95 Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C., TEL:(02) 7123761.

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