
The Origin of the Haitian Cholera Outbreak Strain

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Abstract :

The outbreak of cholera that began in Haiti in late October 2010 illustrates the continued public health threat of this ancient scourge. Cholera, an acutely dehydrating diarrheal disease that can rapidly kill its victims, is caused by *Vibrio cholerae*, a gram-negative bacterium. This disease, which is usually transmitted through contaminated water, can and has spread in an explosive fashion. In the weeks since cases were first confirmed in the Artibonite province of Haiti on October 19, 2010, the disease has reached all 10 provinces in Haiti and has spread to the neighboring Dominican Republic on the island of Hispaniola. Of the more than 93,000 persons who have been sickened from the outbreak, more than 2100 have died, according to the Haitian Ministry of Public Health and Population (www.mspp.gouv.ht/site/index.php), and it is thought that the epidemic has not yet peaked. Cholera epidemics had not been reported in Haiti for more than a century, and the origin of the Haitian *V. cholerae* outbreak has been the subject of some controversy.

Key Word :

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