WHO Global Foodborne Infections Network (GFN): Over 10 years of strengthening national capacities to detect and control foodborne and other enteric infections globally


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WHO Global Foodborne Infections Network (GFN): Over 10 years of strengthening national capacities to detect and control foodborne and other enteric infections globally

M. Ayele1, S.M. DeLong1, D.M.A. Lo Fo Wong2, J.A. Wagenaar3, S. Karlsmose4, N. Maxwell5, K. Knope6, T. Chiller1, and GFN Members

1Division of Foodborne, Waterborne, and Environmental Diseases, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA, United States. 2World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland. 3Utrecht University, the Netherlands. 4WHO Collaborating Centre for Antimicrobial Resistance in Foodborne Pathogens and EU Reference Laboratory for Antimicrobial Resistance, National Food Institute, Copenhagen, Denmark. 5PulseNet International, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA, United States. 6OzFoodNet, Office of Health Protection, Department of Health and Ageing, Canberra, Australia

Our Mission
To enable countries to detect, control, and prevent foodborne and other enteric infections through
- Building capacity for integrated surveillance
- Fostering collaboration among human health, veterinary, food and other relevant sectors

Background
- Network launched as WHO Global Salm-Surv in 2000
- Strengthens national capacities to conduct laboratory-based foodborne disease surveillance and response
- Promotes collaboration between epidemiologists and microbiologists working in the public health, animal, and food sectors
- Technical and financial support provided by eleven Steering Committee Partners and GFN Regional Centers of Excellence

External Quality Assurance System (EQAS)
- Tests laboratories’ abilities to conduct serotyping and antimicrobial susceptibility testing of selected foodborne and enteric pathogens

Country Databank
- A global passive surveillance system of the top 15 Salmonella serotype data for humans, animals, feed, and the environment per country
- Contains a database of GFN Member Contact Information

Focused Regional and National Projects
- Pathogen-specific projects
- Burden of illness studies
- Enhanced surveillance studies

Reference Services
- Verification of findings
- Reply to technical questions
- Laboratory manuals

Communication
- An electronic discussion group (EDG)
- Newsletters and publications
- Websites

Conclusion
- GFN has increased the capacity of nations to effectively conduct laboratory-based surveillance and response
- Future network initiatives will focus on continued enhancement of systems, data collection, focused projects and training course follow-up

Results

Training Activities
- Conducted 74 international courses at 18 sites
- Provided training to more than 1,200 microbiologists and epidemiologists from more than 140 countries

External Quality Assurance System (EQAS)
- 180 laboratories participating in its current cycle

Country Databank
- 1,633 members from 180 countries and 1,081 datasets from 84 countries

Focused Regional and National Projects
- Projects include microbial characterization and enhanced surveillance initiatives in Asia, Africa, and Central America

Reference Services
- More than 30 lab courses and site visits
- More than 20 laboratory manuals developed

Communication
- More than 250 EDG messages distributed
- More than 25 articles published on GFN projects in the international peer-reviewed literature

Methods

(Inter)national Training Activities

Laboratory training
- Isolation and identification of pathogens (e.g., Salmonella, Campylobacter, E. coli, V. cholerae, S. Typhi, Brucella, Shigella, Listeria, C. botulinum)
- Subtyping
- Biosafety and quality assurance

Epidemiology training
- Outbreak detection and response
- Evaluation of surveillance systems
- Study design
- Source attribution
- Burden of illness

Joint epidemiology and laboratory training
- Integrated surveillance
- Risk assessment
- Country Plans of Action
- Advocacy and communication
- Information sharing networks

http://www.who.int/gfn