

YELLOW FEVER VACCINE-ASSOCIATED DEATH - SPAIN

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<<http://elmundosalud.elmundo.es>>

The Sanitation Ministry is retaining a batch of yellow fever vaccine

The Sanitation Ministry reported today [26 Oct 2004] that they are retaining a batch of yellow fever vaccine as a "preventive measure," after a 26-year-old woman from Onuba died from yellow fever stemming from a post-vaccination reaction. The woman was admitted last Thursday [21 Oct 2004] to Juan Ramon Jimenez Hospital in Huelva because of fever and multi-organ failure, having had, in addition to fever, malaise, vomiting, and diarrhea during the previous days.

According to a press release from the hospital, since she was about to travel abroad, the patient was also vaccinated for diphtheria and tetanus on 14 Oct 2004 at the External Sanitation Services in Huelva,

an office of the Sanitary and Consumer Affairs Ministry.

The patient was directly admitted to intensive care, where she was diagnosed with yellow fever associated with a post-vaccine reaction that rapidly progressed and could not be successfully controlled by the medical team, and she died last Friday [22 Oct 2004] at 5:30 AM.

Sources from the Sanitation Ministry reported that they are waiting for new information from the Andalusia Council regarding this case. They also emphasized that people "should still have their vaccines if they have to travel abroad," since the benefits of immunization outweigh the risks.

No past history of such an event in Spain

The same sources gave assurances that the performance of the Huelva Vaccination Center was "perfect" with respect to the protocol, and they have tried to avoid generating unnecessary alarm, insisting that "the batch has been localized."

The Sanitation Ministry commented that "since 1985, there have been only 25 communications reporting mild symptoms considered as vaccine reactions, but not a single case similar to that reported in Huelva." Accordingly, the Sanitation Ministry indicated that the frequency of cases similar to the one reported today [26 Oct 2004] for the age group between 25 and 44 years is less than zero percent per 100 000 inhabitants.

The Ministry is waiting for information about the case from the Andalusia Council; consequently, the vaccine batch retention "is only a preventive measure issued by the Sanitation Ministry," they pointed out.

The Management at Juan Ramon Jimenez Hospital confirmed that samples were sent to the Majahonda National Center for Microbiology and Virology soon after the victim was admitted to the hospital for

biologic confirmation of the case.

Yellow fever vaccine, which is manufactured using attenuated viruses, is not included in the vaccine calendar of the Andalusia Council, since it is a disease absolutely absent in Andalusia and in Europe.

The batch immobilization is a measure recommended by the External Sanitation Department, which belongs to the Ministry of Sanitation and Consumer Affairs, to be complied with only in case of traveling to countries where the disease is still present: i.e., the majority of sub-Saharan countries and tropical countries in the Americas.

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[Brazil, USA, and Australia have also reported such cases (see refs. below). This case does not seem to correspond to problems with the vaccine (contaminated batches), or with manufacturing problems, but is a consequence of a special interaction between the virus in the vaccine and the host; since, in rare cases, there might be an inability by the host to generate an adequate immune response to the virus. - Mod.LJS]

[see also:

2002

Yellow fever vaccine-associated deaths - MMWR report 20021108.5756

2001

Yellow fever vaccine-associated deaths reported 20010715.1367

Yellow fever vaccine-associated deaths (02) 20010727.1467

Yellow fever vaccine-associated deaths (05) 20011201.2925

2000

Yellow fever - Brazil: vaccine deaths 20000326.0436

Yellow fever - Brazil: vaccine deaths (02) 20000328.0452]
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