

Pneumonia associated with dental water line

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In February 2011, an otherwise healthy 82-year-old woman was admitted to hospital with fever and breathing difficulties. Chest x-rays showed several areas of consolidation indicative of pneumonia. Legionnaire's disease was diagnosed by a Legionella urinary antigen test. Despite antibiotic therapy, she developed irreversible septic shock and died two days later. During the incubation period of 2-10 days, the patient only left her house twice, both times to attend a dentist for treatment. Microbiological samples were taken from the taps at the patient's home and from the taps and high-speed drill's turbine and water line at the dental clinic. All the samples from the patient's home were negative for Legionella but the dental cold water tap showed 1.5×10^3 Legionella colony forming units per litre (CFU/L), the dental unit water line 4×10^3 CFU/L and the high speed turbine 6.2×10^4 CFU/L. It was concluded that despite no other patients becoming ill, this elderly patient contracted Legionella during dental treatment.

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