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MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY WEEKLY REPORT

Epidemiologic Notes and Reports

Respiratory Illness Linked to Use of Aerosol Leather Conditioner — Oregon, December 1992

Early on December 27, 1992, the Oregon Poison Control Center (OPCC) notified the Oregon Health Division (OHD) of 13 persons in one household who became ill following the use of an aerosol leather conditioner. This report was similar to calls received on December 26, which alerted the OPCC to a possible cluster of reports related to the product. Late on December 27, the product producer issued a voluntary recall of this product. Following the public announcement of the recall, as of December 31, the number of preliminary reports to the OHD and the OPCC of illness associated with the spray increased to 400 and involved approximately 650 persons. This report summarizes the preliminary investigation of this problem by the OHD.

Although the cluster of reports was recognized by the OPCC on December 27, a subsequent review of telephone logs identified calls on December 23 and on December 26 involving a total of 29 persons in six households who reported illness associated with the spray. Among persons who reported seeking medical attention, symptoms reportedly began within a few minutes to several hours (range: 2 minutes to 3 hours) after using the spray to apply conditioner to leather products. Manifestations of the illness most commonly reported included prolonged cough, shortness of breath, and chest pain (described as burning or squeezing). Persons who contacted the OPCC complained of headache, malaise, and fever as high as 102 F (39 C). At least three persons exhibited signs of pulmonary infiltrates based on radiographic examination; one person was admitted to a hospital with a diagnosis of adult respiratory distress syndrome. At least four other persons were admitted to hospitals for observation or treatment. For most persons, the symptoms appeared to resolve in less than 24 hours.

Following the prompt voluntary recall, by December 31, approximately 275,000 of a possible 350,000 cans of leather protector were removed from stores and distribution channels. The cans are not marked with specific lot identifiers. The OHD and CDC