

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON AUSTRALIA'S IMMIGRATION DETENTION NETWORK

Q38

Health Fears and Asylum Seekers

Question: What are they and how have they been managed?

Answer: The Department's Health Service Provider, International Health and Medical Services (IHMS), has provided the below table, which lists communicable diseases detected in irregular maritime arrivals at immigration detention facilities for the last two financial years. Data for 2008-09 is unavailable as this was prior to changes in 2009 to IHMS' data recording, which enabled electronic recording and recall of communicable disease data (prior to this, reporting was free text only, against individual client records, with no agreed common descriptions or classifications).

Please note, in all but one of these cases, the communicable disease was detected during the person's health induction assessment, which is generally completed within 72 hours of arrival on Christmas Island.

Table 1 - Communicable Diseases Detected in IMA Cohort 2009-11

| Disease | Status | Total |
|------------------|--------|-------|
| Chickenpox | | 2 |
| Chlamydia | | 15 |
| Dengue | | 1 |
| Gonorrhoea | | 4 |
| Hepatitis A | | 2 |
| Hepatitis B | | 39 |
| Hepatitis C | | 9 |
| Influenza | | 7 |
| Leprosy | | 1 |
| Malaria | | 2 |
| Pertussis | | 3 |
| Ross River Fever | | 1 |
| Shingles | | 11 |
| Syphilis | | 39 |
| Tuberculosis | Active | 3 |
| | Latent | 51 |

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|--------------|--|------------|
| Typhoid | | 2 |
| TOTAL | | 192 |

In cases where a communicable disease is identified or suspected, the Department's contracted Health Services Provider liaises with local public health authorities to ensure appropriate measures are in place, such as quarantining and treatment, to prevent other people from being exposed to the disease, including members of the broader Australian community.