

# Core brief

Tuesday, 03 November 2015

## Introduction

This issue of Core Brief is an NHSGGC press release on an increased incidence of *Serratia marcescens* in the neonatal unit within the maternity unit linked to the Royal Hospital for Children.

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### **INVESTIGATION INTO INCREASED INCIDENCE OF SERRATIA MARCESCENS**

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's Public Health Protection Unit and Infection Control Team are investigating an increased incidence of *Serratia marcescens* in the Neonatal Unit within the Maternity unit linked to the Royal Hospital for Children.

Tragically, this weekend a premature baby with existing complex medical problems died following *Serratia marcescens* infection and our deepest sympathies are with the family.

A further five babies currently in the unit are colonised with *Serratia marcescens*, who are not giving any cause for concern.

Colonisation is where bacteria are present on or in the body, but are causing no harm.

As part of our routine surveillance we identified a small increase in *Serratia marcescens* colonisation cases in July and we have been closely monitoring all colonisation cases since then. All appropriate infection control procedures are in place and the situation continues to be monitored closely.

A further seven babies, who are no longer in the hospital, were confirmed as having *Serratia marcescens* colonisation during this time.

Not all the cases involve the same strain of the organism and investigations to establish any links are continuing.

There have been no other cases of *Serratia marcescens* infections.

*Serratia marcescens* colonisation in settings such as this is a recognised UK wide occurrence which is why we screen for it proactively.

Given that there are no other cases on *Serratia marcescens* infection and that all the appropriate infection control procedures are in place the unit will continue to admit new patients.

Alan Mathers, Chief of Medicine for Women and Children's Services, said: "Our deepest sympathies are with the family of the baby who has so sadly passed away."

"None of the five babies in the unit who are colonised are giving cause for concern as a result of the colonisation.

"Serratia marcescens can be naturally occurring in the gut and its presence on or in the body (colonisation) is not harmful in healthy people.

"However given the vulnerability of premature babies, Serratia marcescens infections, where the colonised bacteria gets into the bloodstream, can occur.

"Since the increase in incidence of Serratia marcescens colonisation cases was identified as part of our routine surveillance we have been closely monitoring the situation in line with national guidance.

"Given that there are no other cases of infection and that all the appropriate infection control procedures are in place the unit will continue to admit new patients as normal.

"Our staff are in communication with the families to keep them fully informed."

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