

ISSUE

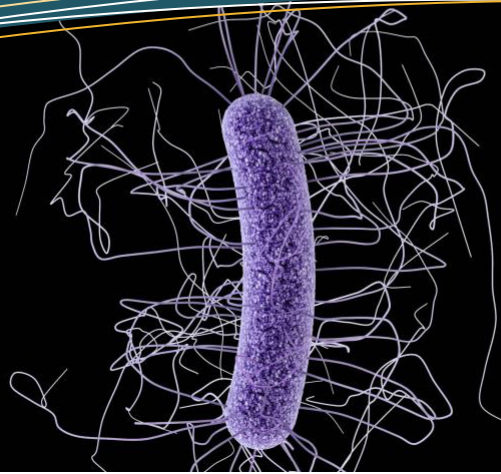
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BULLETIN OF
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CEIP Sentinel

California Emerging
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Clostridium difficile bacillus

This issue:

Sorrows and Laughs : *C.diff* and more

Meet Nicole Del Castillo!

Disseminated Gonococcal Infection

Save the Date: Under Surveillance 2017

Sorrows and Laughs: Enduring *Clostridium difficile* and more

Tig Notaro is a longtime stand-up comedian with dry, witty, and wonderful humor. In July 2012, a four month series of awful happenings began, including a diagnosis of *Clostridium difficile* (*C. diff*). The last of these happenings was bilateral breast cancer and she performed a stand-up show at a comedy club in Los Angeles only days after her diagnosis.¹

A few excerpts from that show: "Good evening. Hello. I have cancer. How are you? Hi, how are you? Is everybody having a good time? I have cancer. How are you? Ah, it's a good time. Diagnosed with cancer. [SIGHS] ...So basically, the events-- I got pneumonia. I was in the hospital for a week for *C. diff*. Got out. A week later, my mother died. I know, it's hilarious. Then I went through a break up, right in the middle of it all. It's tough times. You can't stick around for that. Got to get out before the cancer comes...The condition I had in the hospital is called *C. diff*. And so I just refer to it as the *C. diff* diet. You just sit there and watch the pounds melt away. Don't like exercising? Who does, girlfriend? This diet does all the work for you. Just clear all the bacteria from your intestines and let the *C. diff* whittle away at your waistline."¹

The live show was a massive success and was later nominated for a Grammy. Tig's material and delivery made people laugh and cry throughout the set. Fellow comedian, Louis CK said, "In 27 years doing this, I've seen a handful of truly great, masterful stand-up sets. One was Tig Notaro last night."²

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Sorrows and Laughs continued...

After her powerful struggle with mortality on stage, Tig continued to describe her experience with *C. diff* in interviews, podcasts, comedy specials, T.V. series, and a memoir. She delved into details of diet, treatment, and body changes with raw emotion and refreshing viewpoint. She brought *C. diff* to light using her art platform as public health advocacy and offered a welcome perspective with jokes and sadness on dealing with life's hardships.

CEIP *C. diff* surveillance information: <http://ceip.us/projects/haic/clostridium-difficile-infection-surveillance/>

1. This American Life. What Doesn't Kill You [Internet]. 2012 Oct 5 [cited 2017 Jul 17]. Available at: <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/476/transcript>
2. National Public Radio. Fresh Air. Louis C.K.'s Diagnosis: 'Masterful' [Internet]. 2012 Oct 8 [cited 2017 Jul 17]. Available at: <http://www.npr.org/2012/10/08/162514765/louis-c-k>

Contributed by Brittany Martin, MPH

SAVE THE DATE

CEIP's annual symposium: "Under Surveillance XVII: Emerging Infections in California"

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2017

*Free Continuing Education Units for both
laboratorians and nurses*

Registration opens in October

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Staff Profile: Nicole Del Castillo

Nicole Del Castillo is a research assistant at CEIP. She is involved in various surveillance and research projects including influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) surveillance, the National Antimicrobial Resistance Monitoring System (NARMS), and is a bilingual interviewer for both the *Campylobacter* Case Exposure Ascertainment, California project and the 13-Valent Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) Effectiveness study.

Nicole became interested in public health during her undergraduate studies at the University of California San Diego, where she was one of the first group of students to enroll in the UCSD undergraduate public health program. Initially pursuing a degree in biology, Nicole soon realized that she was much more interested in population based health than “cells and molecules.” The courses she took explored topics such as population health and different barriers to health, and inspired her to pursue a career in the field. While attending UCSD, Nicole also studied abroad in Oaxaca, Mexico, and was able to shadow health professionals and learn about health systems in the US and Mexico.



Prior to coming to work at CEIP, Nicole volunteered monthly at a clinic in Ensenada, Mexico, where she would facilitate presentations for patients in topics pertaining to the education of healthy lifestyles and prevention of chronic diseases, and was also involved in the HIV Neurobehavioral Research Program at UCSD. Her work in Ensenada and Oaxaca has led her to become passionate about maternal and child health, and she hopes to eventually be a mentor for Hatch, a doula service that focuses on low-income, young parents.

Nicole has been an integral part of managing the data from this year’s massive flu season, data-entering a record-breaking number of cases and performing vaccine follow-up responsibilities in a timely manner. While she admits that it has been overwhelming at times, she enjoys the challenge, finds the results rewarding, and is glad to learn about how her work helps in preventing infectious diseases in the community and beyond.

In her free time, Nicole enjoys playing video games and is currently playing *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*! She would love to one day visit Machu Picchu and, after attending the world-famous San Diego Comic-Con this year, has made it a goal to become a regular attendee.

Contributed by Gar-Wei Lee, MPH

Launch of Disseminated Gonococcal Infections (DGI) Surveillance

On January 1, 2017, CEIP staff began surveillance for *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* in blood, joint and synovial fluid. Gonorrhea, caused by the bacterium *N. gonorrhoeae*, is the second most commonly reported sexually transmitted infection (STI) in the United States. Disseminated gonococcal infections (DGI) are rare, consequently the current epidemiology of DGI, including molecular epidemiology, is not well described. Additionally, as *N. gonorrhoeae* can develop resistance to antimicrobials, susceptibility data are needed to inform DGI treatment recommendations. Our goal is to help inform DGI prevention and control activities by describing the burden of DGI in Alameda, Contra Costa and San Francisco counties and by performing antimicrobial susceptibility and whole genome sequencing on identified DGI isolates.

CEIP is requesting that laboratories submit blood, joint and synovial fluid isolates that are positive for *N. gonorrhoeae*. Please call our office to arrange for courier pickup at (510) 451-1344. For more information, please contact the ABCs Coordinator, Mirasol Apostol, at mapostol@ceip.us.

Contributed by Mirasol Apostol, MPH

Opportunities at CEIP

Please check the
following websites
for future postings:

www.phfe.org

www.ceip.us



The California Emerging Infections Program
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California Department of Public Health.