



**Epidemiology Unit
Ministry of Health**

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All Regional Directors of Health Services

Requirement of laboratory confirmation of clinical Measles and Rubella cases

Measles is currently at the elimination stage. Therefore laboratory confirmation of all fever rash patients suspected of measles and rubella (fever and maculopapular rash) is mandatory.

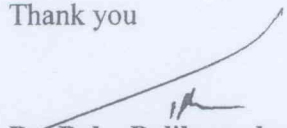
Fever rash patients with possible Measles or Rubella without any complications may remain in the community without seeking medical care from health institutions. Early detection of these sporadic measles and rubella cases occurring at community level is very crucial in early interventions and to evaluate current control strategies.

Please bring to the notice of all your MOH staff and instruct them to identify possible measles and rubella cases in the community during their field visits and should duly notify to the MOH. Please instruct them to make aware the relevant private health institutions including General Practitioners in their respective areas on this regard. The required instructions in sample collection in laboratory confirmation are attached hereto as an annexure (Annexure 1).

Detailed field investigation of all confirmed measles and rubella cases are mandatory by the MOH and relevant Special Investigation forms need to be sent to the Epidemiology Unit.

While appreciating your continued support in disease surveillance activities, I hope you would actively contribute in this endeavour a success.

Thank you


Dr. Paba Palihawadana
Chief Epidemiologist

Cc:

- DDG/PHS 1
- PDHS
- Director/Private Health sector
- Director/ MRI
- Consultant Virologist/ MRI
- Regional Epidemiologist

Strengthening Measles / Rubella surveillance
Instructions for laboratory confirmation
Epidemiology Unit-2012

General instructions: Blood sample collection and transport to virology laboratory-MRI

- Blood should be drawn from suspected of measles or rubella cases (fever with maculopapular rash) within the period of 3 to 28 days of the onset of rash for laboratory confirmation
- 3 ml blood need to be collected to a normal, clean, dry, sterile, plain, small bottle with a cap.
(Required bottle should be prepared at the MOH office or could be obtained from the nearest hospital)
- Collection of blood sample can be done by the MOH or by the PHNS at the MOH office or at the field clinic
- Collected blood sample will get clotted within 30-45mts after collection and the clotted sample should be labelled correctly with information of , the name of the test requested (Measles IgM or Rubella IgM), patient's name, age, sex, MOH area as in the example given below

Eg:

Rubella IgM

Mr. P, samaraweera
30 yrs, male
MOH -Dehiwala

- If facility available for serum separation from a nearest hospital, separated serum can be sent to the laboratory
- Complete a request form including following details: Name of the patient, age , sex, MOH area, Date of onset of rash , Date of sample collected, MMR/ Measles or Rubella vaccination given or not and number of doses given
- Collected sample need to be sent to Virology Laboratory at MRI. The specimen counter at MRI is open for 24 hours /day
- If the time of blood sample collected gets delayed to reach the MRI laboratory more than 6hours, store the sample in the door of the refrigerator for minimum possible time and make arrangements to transport in a cold chain as early as possible, before 72 hrs to reach the MRI.

Strengthening Measles /Rubella surveillance

Surveillance procedure

(a) Patients notified from hospitals

- Patients notified from the hospital are required to be investigated as early as possible, preferably within 7 days.
- If the laboratory confirmation (IgM for Measles or Rubella) has been done at the hospital, and the report is available complete the special investigation form and send to the Epidemiology Unit.
- If the laboratory confirmation (IgM for Measles or Rubella) has been done and the report is not available, try to obtain the report and continue with routine investigation procedure.
- If the hospital has not sent a blood sample to MRI for confirmation (Measles or Rubella IgM) MOH needs to collect the blood sample 28 days from the onset of the rash. (follow the procedure mentioned above in collection and transport of the blood sample)
- Special investigation procedure needs to be followed for all notified cases (enter in the Notification register, Infectious Disease register and should complete the Special Investigation Form) as early as possible.
- If the MRI laboratory report is not available by the time the Special Investigation Form is completed, please mention in the relevant section (section 'D' Laboratory Findings) that the date of blood sample sent to MRI and as pending the report. In such occasions Epidemiology Unit will coordinate with the MRI /Virology Laboratory to identify the result and complete the relevant section.
- All sections of the Special Investigation form should be duly completed by the MOH.

(b) Patients identified at the community level

- All field health staff (PHNS, SPHI, SPHM, PHM, PHI) should aware of the importance of measles/rubella surveillance procedure and get assistance in identifying possible patients at community level.
- Information of suspected measles/rubella cases received from field health staff during their field visits or in any other means should report / notify to the MOH. Such cases should take in to the Notification Register and due surveillance procedure should be followed including laboratory confirmation.