



Merlin disease code: 13621 Amebic Encephalitis (*Acanthamoeba*)

[Paper case report form](#) required

No Merlin extended data

## Clinical criteria for case classification

An infection presenting as meningoencephalitis or encephalitis, disseminated disease (affecting multiple organ systems), or cutaneous disease. *Acanthamoeba* species GAE presents similarly to *B. mandrillaris* GAE with early personality and behavioral changes, depressed mental status, fever, photophobia, seizures, nonspecific cranial nerve dysfunction, and visual loss. Skin lesions and sinus disease may also be seen.

## Laboratory criteria for case classification

### Confirmatory:

Detection of *Acanthamoeba* species antigen or nucleic acid (e.g., PCR, immunohistochemistry) from a clinical specimen (e.g., tissue).

### Supportive:

Culture of *Acanthamoeba* species from a clinical specimen (e.g., tissue).

## Epidemiological criteria for case classification

Not applicable.

## Case classification

### Confirmed:

A clinically compatible illness in a person with confirmatory laboratory criteria.

### Suspect:

A clinically compatible illness in a person with supportive laboratory criteria.

## Criteria to distinguish a new case from previous reports

Not applicable.

## Comments

*Acanthamoeba* species and *B. mandrillaris* can cause clinically similar illnesses and might be difficult to differentiate using commonly available laboratory procedures. Definitive diagnosis by a reference laboratory might be required. Several species of *Acanthamoeba* are associated with infection (i.e., *A. castellanii*, *A. culbertsoni*, *A. hatchetti*, *A. healyi*, *A. polyphaga*, *A. rhysodes*, *A. astonyxis*, *A. lenticulata*, and *A. divionensis*). A negative test on CSF does not rule out *Acanthamoeba* species infection because the organism is not commonly present in the CSF.