Clinical criteria for case classification

A. Acute cough illness of any duration.
B. Cough illness lasting ≥2 weeks.
C. One or more of the following signs and symptoms:
   - Paroxysms of coughing,
   - Or inspiratory "whoop",
   - Or posttussive vomiting,
   - Or for infants <1 year old only: apnea, with or without cyanosis.

Laboratory criteria for case classification

D. Isolation of *Bordetella pertussis* by culture from clinical specimen.
E. Positive polymerase chain reaction (PCR) for *B. pertussis*.

Epidemiological criteria for case classification

F. A person who is epidemiologically linked to a confirmed pertussis case.
G. A person who is epidemiologically linked to a PCR-confirmed probable infant pertussis case.

Case classification

**Confirmed:**
One of the following:
- A person with an acute cough illness of any duration (A) with isolation of *B. pertussis* by culture from a clinical specimen (D),
- Or a person with a cough illness lasting ≥2 weeks (B) with one at least other symptom (C) and positive PCR for *B. pertussis* (E),
- Or a person with a cough illness lasting ≥2 weeks (B) with one at least other symptom (C) who is epidemiologically linked to a confirmed case (F).

**Probable:**
One of the following
- A person with a cough illness lasting ≥2 weeks (B) with at least one other symptom (C),
- Or a person with a cough illness lasting ≥2 weeks (B) with at least one other symptom (C) who is epidemiologically linked to a PCR-confirmed probable infant case (G),
- Or for infants <1 year old only: An infant with an acute cough illness of any duration (A) with at least one other symptom (C) and positive PCR for *B. pertussis* (E),
- Or for infants <1 year old only: An infant with an acute cough illness of any duration (A) with at least one other symptom (C) who is epidemiologically linked to a confirmed case (F),
- Or for infants <1 year old only: An infant with an acute cough illness of any duration (A) with at least one other symptom (C) who is epidemiologically linked to a PCR-confirmed probable infant case (G).
Criteria to distinguish a new case from previous reports

Not applicable.

Comments

The clinical criteria above are appropriate for endemic or sporadic cases. In outbreak settings, a case may be defined as a cough illness lasting ≥2 weeks (as reported by a health professional). Because direct fluorescent antibody testing of nasopharyngeal secretions has been demonstrated in some studies to have low sensitivity and variable specificity,¹,² such testing should not be relied on as a criterion for laboratory confirmation. Serologic testing (IgM and IgG) for pertussis is available in some areas but is not standardized and, therefore, should not be relied on as a criterion for laboratory confirmation.


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