

## State Health Department Response Protocol for Reports on Disease Clusters

Adapted from: Fiore, B.J., Hanrahan, L.P., and Anderson, H.A. (1990) State health department response to disease cluster reports: A protocol for investigation. American Journal of Epidemiology, 132, supplement (1), S14-S21.

Use this protocol as a guide for your investigation

Describe the Cluster  
Determine geographic locations, type,  
number of cases, age, time period

Verify the Cases  
Obtain medical records of disease  
cases, death certificates

Risk Assessment  
Characterize disease group cases by  
age and time lived in defined region.  
Determine comparison population's  
disease rate (via state, county, zip  
code, or US census)

Statistically Analyze Disease Rates  
Compare the disease rates of the  
"cluster" vs. the comparison  
population

Examine Potential Exposure  
Investigate environmental or  
occupational exposures

Determine if the Disease is Biologically  
Plausible  
Does the type of disease match the  
exposure?

Determine Cluster Significance  
Determine if this investigation merits  
further action  
Refer to the "Cluster Significance  
Chart"

Report Results  
Write a report on the investigation.  
This is kept on file and used for future  
reference, especially if a full  
investigation is done.