

# Epidemiology and surveillance of meningococcal disease in Malta

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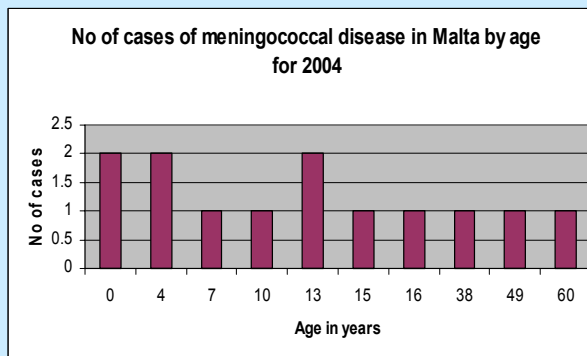
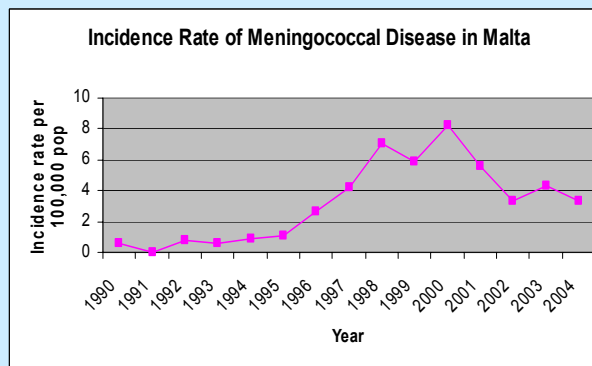
## Background

Malta produces statistics on invasive meningococcal disease (MD). Outlined here are the methods used to ascertain the number of cases and conclusions that can be drawn from the pattern of incidence.

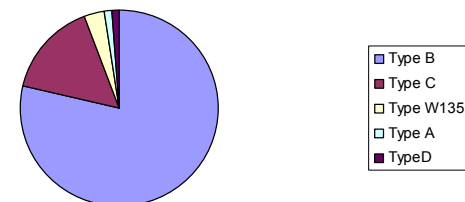
## Methods

*Meningococcal disease is a statutory notifiable disease. Medical doctors and medical diagnostic laboratories are obliged to notify cases even on clinical suspicion. Laboratory diagnostic methods for confirming MD include microscopy, culture and serotyping. Serotyping and subtyping is carried out in a meningococcal reference lab in the UK. Clinicians are encouraged to take blood cultures, petechial scrapings and throat swabs.*

## Results



N.meningitidis serotypes in Malta 1995-2004



## Conclusions

*Meningococcal disease (MD) has become a public health concern in Malta since 1996 when there was a steady increase in the reported incidence of the disease until 2000. From a reported incidence of 0.8 per 100,000 cases in 1994, the reported incidence reached 8.2 per 100,000 in 2000. The reported incidence rate dropped after the year 2000 to reach a rate of 3.5 per 100,000 in 2002. During 2004, the reported rate was 3.34 per 100,000.*

*Of the 13 notified cases in 2004, N. meningitidis was cultured in 7 cases (53%). Information on serogroup, type and subtype was available in all of these seven cases. Of the serogroupable cases (7), serogroup B accounted for 6 cases (85%) and serogroup A for one case (14%). There were no cases of serogroup C, W-135 or serogroup D.*