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Outbreak of Mycoplasma Pneumonia

Researchers from the CDC and the US Merchant Marine Academy reported an outbreak of *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* infection among students at a Federal Service Academy. During a 2-month outbreak, 164 of 233 (70%) of freshmen and 154 of 354 (44%) upperclassmen questioned reported having a respiratory illness consistent with *M pneumoniae* infection. Of the 199 ill students who had complete laboratory evaluation, 65 (55%) had laboratory evidence of *M pneumoniae* infection. The first phase of the outbreak involved freshmen;

the second, occurring 2 to 3 weeks later, involved predominantly upperclassmen, who had arrived on campus 2 weeks after the freshmen. In a multivariate analysis of the first phase, ill students were more likely than well ones to have multiple visits to the academy's health clinic before the onset of respiratory illness. A case-control study of freshman visiting the clinic showed that transmission was more likely when more than six people were present in the waiting room. The authors concluded that crowding in the health clinic was

a significant risk factor for *M pneumoniae* infection in this outbreak. A separate waiting room for patients with respiratory symptoms during an outbreak of *M pneumoniae* may limit transmission.

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