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INCREASE IN PERTUSSIS CASES in WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE

An increase in pertussis cases has been reported in the Western Cape Province amongst children aged <5 of age, and particularly amongst infants 1 year and younger (Figure). Pertussis, commonly known as ‘whooping cough’ is a vaccine-preventable disease caused by *Bordetella pertussis* and is notifiable according to the Health Act. Immunity following vaccination lasts for 8-10 years. Episodic increases in pertussis cases occur in vaccinated populations every 3-5 years. Clinicians are advised to be on the alert for cases, to conduct diagnostic testing where appropriate, to notify cases and prescribe post-exposure prophylaxis to contacts of suspected or confirmed cases. Of 76 identified pertussis cases in 2017, 64 (84%) were aged <1 year.

A one-page summary of guidance for clinicians, as well as the latest version of the ‘NICD recommendations for pertussis diagnosis, management and public health response’ may be found on the NICD web page (www.nicd.ac.za) under ‘Alerts’ and on the Diseases A-Z tab, under ‘Pertussis’.

Figure: Number of cases of laboratory-confirmed pertussis cases from the pneumonia surveillance programme, Western Cape Province, 2015-2017

