Title: An outbreak of Streptococcus equi subspecies zooepidemicus associated with consumption of fresh goat cheese

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Author's response to reviews: see over
The Editor
BMC Infectious Diseases

January 5, 2005

Dear Dr Newmark,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit the revised version of our manuscript ‘An outbreak of Streptococcus equi subspecies zooepidemicus associated with consumption of fresh goat cheese’ to the BMC Infectious Diseases Journal.

We have revised the manuscript according to the comments from the two reviewers. The comments from both reviewers were useful and constructive, and we believe they have helped us to improve the manuscript. We have added sentences on ethical approval and informed consent to the methods section as required. We would now like to resubmit the revised article for consideration in the journal.

Please find enclosed responses to reviewers’ comments and the revised manuscript.

Yours sincerely

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Responses to reviewers’ comments

Reviewer: Jose Francisco Fernández-Garayzábal

General comment

We thank the reviewer for these positive comments on our manuscript. We agree that it was an important finding that the same S. equi subsp. zooepidemicus strain was also isolated from the persons who manufactured cheese. This can also have resulted from direct contact with the animals or from handling of the contaminated milk or cheese. This issue has now been brought up in the discussion (Page 12, para 3).

Minor Essential Revisions

1. We have corrected the grammatical errors the reviewer pointed out.

2. There was a small mistake in the previous version of the manuscript. Only one milk sample from the tank was investigated. This sample contained milk that was milked on two different days, i.e. in the evening of October 27 and in the morning of October 28. We have corrected the number of milk samples from two to one in the manuscript (Page 6, para 3). A sample was also taken from the other farm’s milk tank, and we have added this in the manuscript (page 7, line 1 and page 9, para 2).

3. In this study, lack of a selective medium was mainly a problem in the examination of cheese samples, but not in the examination of samples from the animals. It was not particularly difficult to interpret the samples taken from goats. We have added a paragraph discussing about the use of selective medium in the investigation to the manuscript (Page 13, para 2).

4. The strains were indistinguishable in PFGE with both restriction enzymes (ApaI and Sma I). We have added this in the manuscript (Page 9, para 3).

5. We have changed the names of micro-organisms to italics in references.

6. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is added as the author of reference 17 (18 in the previous version of the manuscript).
Reviewer: Christoph Lämmler

Discretionary Revisions

We thank the reviewer for these positive comments on our manuscript. We have made two modifications to the manuscript as the reviewer suggested.

1. The median age in the outbreak was 70 years. We have corrected the mistake on page 8.

2. In the abstract on page 3 we have changed the wording as suggested: *Streptococcus equi* subspecies *zooepidemicus* is a rare infection in humans associated with contact with horses or consumption of unpasteurized milk products.