Persons using assistive technology might not be able to fully access information in this file. For assistance, please send e-mail to: mmwrq@cdc.gov. Type 508 Accommodation and the title of the report in the subject line of e-mail. Fourteen states (Arizona, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Mississippi, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia) have reported investigations of multiple schoolchildren who have developed rashes. This report summarizes the investigation by state and local health departments of these rashes, which have occurred during October 2001 through February 2002, and provides examples for four states. Preliminary findings indicate that further investigation is needed to determine whether a common etiology for these rashes exists.

UNITED STATES

The first reported incident occurred October 4, 2001, in Indiana, followed by cases in Virginia that began November 20. Subsequent cases of rashes began in late January and occurred as recently as February 21. Rashes have been reported primarily from elementary schools but also among students in a few middle and high schools. The number of affected students in each state ranges from <10 to approximately 600. A few teachers and school staff have been affected, but rarely parents or siblings.

Characteristics of the rashes vary, but onset has generally been acute, typically with maculopapular erythematous lesions---possibly in a reticulated pattern---on the face, neck, hands, or arms; duration

of the rash varied but in most reports it
was highly pruritic. The rashes were not attributed to a defined environmental exposure or infectious agent. Children with
rashes were afebrile and usually had no other associated signs or symptoms. The rashes lasted from a few hours to 2 weeks
and appeared to be self-limiting. Secondary transmission has not been reported, but in-school "sympathy" cases have
reportedly occurred. Diagnoses by clinicians who have examined children have included viral exanthem, contact or atopic
dermatitis, eczema, chemical exposure, impetigo, and poison ivy. Approximately 40 serum samples collected in four states have been
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rash may be evanescent, or remain for as long as 2 weeks; recurrent cases have been reported. There have been no other

associated symptoms. Among the 54 students reported initially, serologies for parvovirus B19 were drawn on 13 cases; all were

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health-care provider reported that results of nonserological (biopsy) specimens from his patients were consistent with viral

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These investigations have included sampling for dust mite and cockroach allergens, solvents and cleaners, and fungal or

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PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE

CDC is working with state and local health and education agencies in these investigations to determine if affected children within and between schools have developed rash as a result of a common etiology. CDC is systematically compiling information about 1) date of onset and duration of rash; 2) settings of and circumstances surrounding the rash's appearance; 3) the number, age, and sex of affected persons; 4) the appearance and

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expected that rashes from a wide range of causes will be observed. Environmental factors or infectious agents can cause rashes

among groups of school-aged children. Rashes caused by infectious agents usually are preceded or accompanied by symptoms such

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Potential environmental causes of rashes include biologic contaminants (e.g., bacteria and fungi), chemical agents

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The most commonly identified viral agent associated with rashes in school-aged children is parvovirus B19, which

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expected that rashes from a wide range of causes will be observed. Environmental factors or infectious agents can cause rashes

among groups of school-aged children. Rashes caused by infectious agents usually are preceded or accompanied by symptoms such

as headache or fever. However, in these reports, none of the children showed signs of systemic illness, and the rash appeared

to be self-limiting.

Potential environmental causes of rashes include biologic contaminants (e.g., bacteria and fungi), chemical agents

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causes erythema infectiosum (i.e., fifth disease). Fifth disease is a mild rash illness characterized by a "slapped-cheek" rash on the

face and a lacy red rash on the trunk and limbs, which may itch; it usually resolves within 7--10 days. Low-grade fever, malaise,

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CDC is working with state and local health and education agencies in these investigations to determine if affected
children within and between schools have developed rash as a result of a common etiology. CDC is systematically
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