Salmonella Poona multi-country outbreak linked to infant formula

The multi-country outbreak of Salmonella Poona that has affected young children in France, Belgium and Luxembourg has a common food source – an assessment suggests.

Health officials in France, Belgium and Luxembourg reported Salmonella Poona cases in young children, all genetically linked to the same outbreak. Overall, 32 confirmed cases were reported in the EU: 30 in France, 1 in Belgium, 1 in Luxembourg. All patients experienced the symptoms between August 2018 and February 2019.

An assessment by EFSA and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) indicates that the common source of the outbreak is three rice-based infant formula products made by a factory in Spain between August and October 2018 and marketed by a French company.

All affected people for whom information is available consumed these products (30 out of 32).

The products were sold to other countries (EU, EFTA and other countries) through e-commerce and wholesalers. In addition, the French company sold the products to four countries outside Europe.

So far all tests performed at the Spanish factory and on samples of the implicated batches have been negative for Salmonella Poona. This may be due to the fact that Salmonella is typically difficult to detect in dried products and requires sampling and testing methods with a high degree of sensitivity.

Public warnings and recalls were issued in the countries where the products were distributed, which EFSA and ECDC experts said should decrease the risk of new infections.

Report: Multi-country outbreak of Salmonella Poona infections linked to consumption of infant formula