

Fish Handler's Disease

What is it and why should you care?

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Who are we?

- 24/7 International Air Ambulance based at YVR
- Partnered with Helijet International
- Transport 200 adults, children, babies a year
- Provide remote medical support to Sport fishing lodges and Oil and Gas industry

Remote medical support

Why do we do it ?

- Most experience has been in Oil and gas industry
- Also austere environments (marine, aircraft, extreme sports)
- Pre deployment medical planning is essential
- On line support has provided safer work environments and resulted in fewer evacuations and workforce impacts

FHD – What is it?

- AKA : 'herring disease" "fish poisoning"
- Bacterial infection
- *Erysipelothrix rhusiopathiae*
- *Mycobacterium marinum*
- Endemic to our region
- Can progress to limb and life threatening disease

How do you get it?



- Unprotected contact with fish/shellfish
- Fish do not have to be alive (ie bait)
- Bacteria enters the skin through cuts/abrasions
- Spreads along the tendons and potentially the bloodstream



Is it bad?

- Usually local inflammation and infection
- Very painful and debilitating
- If left untreated can result in systemic spread
 - Limb threatening
 - Endocarditis (infection of heart valve)
 - Death



Patient 11: 100 days after admission, continued debridement and removal of the existing skin and apparatus.

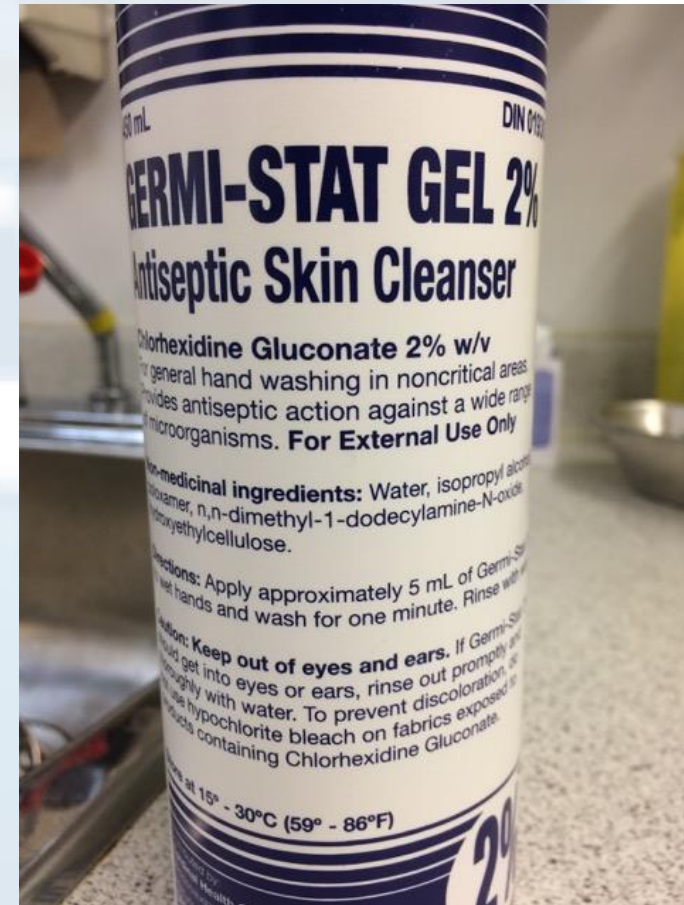
How do you treat it?

- Responds to early, appropriate antibiotic treatment
- Early and correct diagnosis is key (though often not the case)
- If progression, then may require surgery



Lets not get it in the first place

- Gloves
- Frequent hand washing
 - 5% phenol
 - 1% Sodium Hypochlorite



Summary

- FHD is endemic and common in our environment
- Early diagnosis and treatment is very important to prevent disability
- FHD has a significant impact on increasing work time loss and logistical costs
- Prevention is key in lowering infection risk and overall impact

Questions?

What do you call a
fish with no eye?



A fsh.



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