

FEDERAL
COORDINATING
OFFICE

MOUNT ST. HELENS
TECHNICAL INFORMATION
NETWORK

federal emergency
management agency

Sunday, June 8, 1980

BULLETIN #16 - "Health and Medical Update"

(This report updates material contained in previous Technical Information Bulletins, most importantly, #3, #8, #10, #13, and #14. It is based on material provided by the Center for Disease Control.)

This is one of a series of surveillance reports issued by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) on the public health assessment of the volcanic eruption. Information in it represents the latest data reported to CDC from state health departments, federal agencies, and other sources. Some of the information is preliminary in nature and subject to confirmation and change.

CDC is the federal agency responsible for assisting states to evaluate public health concerns. CDC was invited to assist in this investigation by the State of Washington Department of Social and Health Services on May 21, 1980. In coordination with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), a team from CDC and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health has been in the State of Washington since then.

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SURVEILLANCE OF HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS

A number of hospitals in the states of Washington, Idaho, and Montana are included in the health surveillance network for the Mount St. Helens disaster. (See Technical Information Network Bulletin #10.)

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To date, nine hospitals in Washington, five in Idaho, and seven in Montana have complete reporting on the number of emergency room (ER) visits for the period of May 11-26, 1980. Because the Moses Lake area (including Moses Lake, population 10,900; Othello, population 4,649; and Ritzville, population 1,940) is most affected by the eruptions, the three hospitals in that area are reported separately from the other six in Washington. All hospitals are located in areas with volcanic ash fallout. The amount of ash is lower in Idaho than in Washington, and lower in Montana than in Idaho.

Table 1 shows the daily ER visits for the Moses Lake area, and the states of Washington, Idaho, and Montana during May 11-26, 1980. For the Moses Lake area, the number of visits increased steadily after the first volcanic eruption, on May 18. In the week of May 18-24, the ER visits increased 34.2% over the number the previous week, May 11-17, (Table 2). The hospitals in Washington and Montana showed increases of 2.7% and 8.0%, respectively. However, in Idaho the visits decreased 9.1% in the week after the first eruption, (Table 2), but appeared to be increasing after the second eruption on May 25, 1980, (Table 1).

For the Moses Lake area, there appears to have been an abrupt increase in ER visits on May 24, 1980. This coincides with the beginning of clean-up efforts. Between May 18 and May 23, the residents were advised by state officials to stay indoors. The reasons for the increased visits are now being investigated.

A team headed by Russell Ephraim, M.D., departed for Moses Lake on June 1 to review these ER visits. The team also conducted a field survey of approximately 200 families to collect additional information on potential health problems in that area.

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Detailed health reports will be issued by CDC regularly on Tuesdays and Fridays, or more frequently if necessary, until the emergency ends.

To be added to the CDC mailing list, please contact:

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FROM: CDC--Mt. St. Helens Volcano Health Report #2, June 2, 1980.

TABLE 1. Daily hospital emergency room visits for the Moses Lake area in Washington, and the states of Washington, Idaho, and Montana May 11-26, 1980.

<u>DAY OF WEEK</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>MOSES LAKE, OTHELLO, RITZVILLE, WA.</u>	<u>WASHINGTON (OTHER)</u>	<u>IDAHO</u>	<u>MONTANA</u>
SUNDAY	MAY 11	67	328	100	244
MONDAY	12	52	326	99	313
TUESDAY	13	47	278	84	278
WEDNESDAY	14	46	295	100	311
THURSDAY	15	46	282	72	271
FRIDAY	16	52	294	85	228
SATURDAY	17	79	376	130	405
TOTAL	--	389	2179	670	2050
SUNDAY	18*	53	301	100	375
MONDAY	19	69	336	70	255
TUESDAY	20	71	350	95	282
WEDNESDAY	21	65	309	69	334
THURSDAY	22	74	330	90	299
FRIDAY	23	75	280	91	336
SATURDAY	24	115	331	94	334
TOTAL	--	552	2237	609	2215
SUNDAY	25**	89	363	95	306
MONDAY	26	105	356	144	325

*First volcanic eruption

**Second volcanic eruption

TABLE 2. Percent change in hospital emergency room visits between the weeks for May 11-17 and May 17-24, 1980.

<u>WEEK</u>	<u>MOSES LAKE AREA</u>	<u>WASHINGTON (OTHER)</u>	<u>IDAHO</u>	<u>MONTANA</u>
May 11-17	389	2,179	670	2,050
May 18-24	522	2,237	609	2,215
Percent change	+34.2%	+2.7%	-9.1%	+8.0%

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