**Introduction**

Tularemia, which is caused by the bacterium *Francisella tularensis*, exist in several different forms; ulceroglandular, ocular-glandular, typhoidal (septic), pulmonary and oropharyngeal. Sweden experiences recurrent outbreaks with irregular intervals and geographical localisations. Although infections with the type B strains found in Sweden does not normally result in fatalities, they cause significant morbidity unless treated early. Infections are normally treated with ciprofloxacin or doxycycline although aminoglycosides can be used. The infection is classified as notifiable under the Swedish Communicable Diseases Act.

The Norrbotten County is the largest and northernmost county in Sweden and is situated around the arctic circle. It comprises 14 municipalities with a total area of 98,911 km², which is about 25% of the total land area in Sweden. The county has about 250,000 inhabitants which is 2,5% of the total population in Sweden and has a population density close to that of Montana. Almost 60% of the population live in the 3 municipalities Luleå (75,966 inhabitants), Piteå (415,08 inhabitants) and Boden (278,577 inhabitants).

Starting in July 2015, we experienced an unusually large outbreak of tularemia, prompting an epidemiological investigation.

**Methods**

Cases were extracted from the County Council of Norrbottens database for notifiable diseases and were analyzed with respect to geographic localization, clinical presentation and a number of other parameters. Population figures and maps were obtained from Statistics Sweden (www.scb.se)

**Results**

The incidence varies widely between years as illustrated for the last 20 years. The 406 cases of 2015 is a doubling of the previous high in the year of 2012 and puts it amongst the largest outbreaks in Sweden during the period for which statistics is available.

**Actions taken during the outbreak**

- Updated guidelines for diagnosis and treatment.
- Frequent updates of statistics (multiple times per week) during the outbreak.
- Educational efforts (media, e-mails to physicians, hospital homepage etc).

**Conclusions**

- The tularemia outbreak of 2015 was the largest in Norrbotten so far and one of the largest ever in Sweden.
- Outbreaks seems to become more common and result in more cases in Norrbotten.
- The 2015 outbreak showed expected patterns of age-distribution and clinical manifestations.

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