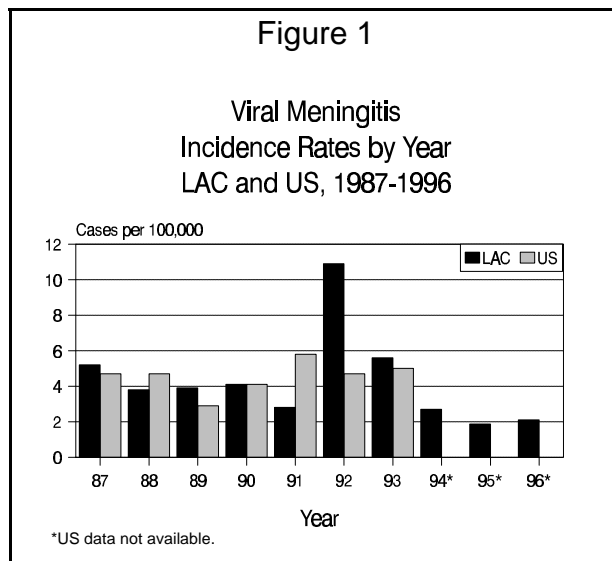




MENINGITIS, VIRAL

CRUDE DATA	
Number of Cases	185
Annual Incidence ^a	
LA County	2.1
United States	N/A
Age at Onset	
Mean	25
Median	24
Range	< 1-95 yrs
Case Fatality	
LA County	4.3%
United States	N/A

^aCases per 100,000 population.



ETIOLOGY

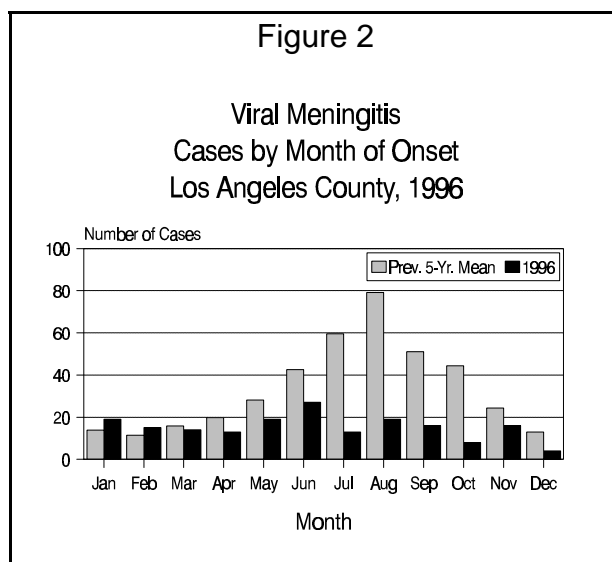
A wide variety of viruses can cause meningitis. Identification of a specific etiologic agent is rarely undertaken and is not a requirement for reporting. Previous studies show that the vast majority of cases are of undetermined etiology. Of those with laboratory confirmation, most are caused by enteroviruses.

DISEASE ABSTRACT

After a three-year decline, the overall viral meningitis incidence rate increased slightly in 1996. As in previous years, the highest incidence rate was observed among infants less than one year of age.

STRATIFIED DATA

Trends: The incidence rate for viral meningitis in 1996 (2.1 cases per 100,000 population) is a slight increase over that observed in 1995 (1.9 cases per 100,000), ending a three-year downward trend since peaking at 10.9 cases per 100,000 in 1992 (Figure 1).





Seasonality: Viral meningitis incidence typically increases during the summer. In 1996, although cases peaked in June, the typical summer seasonality was less pronounced (Figure 2). This observation, along with relatively low overall incidence compared with previous years, suggests decreased enteroviral activity in the County during this reporting period.

Age: Although viral meningitis occurred in all age groups, the highest age-specific incidence rate occurred in infants less than one year old (23.0 cases per 100,000 population) (Figure 3). Eighty-three percent of cases in this age group occurred among Hispanic infants. Explanations for the disproportionately high rates found consistently among infants and young children may include lack of acquired immunity and the ease of fecal-oral transmission of enteroviruses in this age group.

Sex: The male-to-female rate ratio was 1.2:1.

Race/Ethnicity: The age-adjusted incidence rate was highest among Blacks (3.4 cases per 100,000 population), followed by Whites (2.3 per 100,000), Hispanics (1.9 per 100,000), and Asians (0.6 per 100,000) (Figure 4). The highest age- and race/ethnicity-specific rates were seen in Hispanic infants less than one year old (31.0 per 100,000) (data not shown). In 1996 compared with 1995, age-adjusted viral meningitis incidence rates increased 65% among Blacks, 17% among Hispanics, and 17% among Whites, but decreased 52% among Asians.

Location: Eleven health districts experienced rates higher than the overall LAC rate of 2.1 cases per 100,000 population. Foothill, El Monte, Compton, Pomona, and Glendale Health Districts had the highest rates at 3.3, 3.0, 2.9, 2.8, and 2.8 cases per 100,000, respectively.

Figure 3

Viral Meningitis
Incidence Rates by Age Group
Los Angeles County, 1996

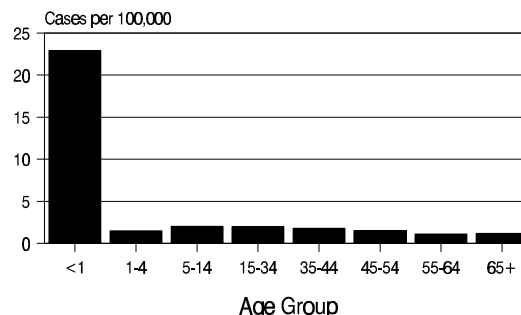


Figure 4

Viral Meningitis
Age-adjusted Incidence Rates by Race/Ethnicity
Los Angeles County, 1995 and 1996

