

An Overview of Type E Botulism in China

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The geographical distribution of *C. botulinum* type E and its associated disease, type E botulism in China, is different from that in other areas of the world. Cases of type E botulism generally arise in coastal regions. In China, however, type E botulism is found primarily in the Qinghai-Tibet plateau of northwest China far from the ocean, at an altitude of approximately 4-5 km. The foods most commonly associated with the disease are fermented grain and beans as well as raw meat. A suspected outbreak of type E botulism poisoning in the central coastal region of China in the 1990s prompted the collection and analysis of samples of mud, sand, and fish from the region. The toxin produced by type E botulinum was found in these samples. Surprisingly, though, upon further analysis, the strain isolated from the samples was identified not as type E *C. botulinum*, but as the neurotoxicogenic bacterium *Clostridium butyricum*.

Key words: *Clostridium botulinum*; Botulism; Geographical distribution

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