interest is the high proportion of contacts with dogs at 140 (36.9%). The total number of reported contacts with mice was 74 (19.5%). Of the 140 (36.9%) dog contacts reported, 113 (79%) also had rat and/or mice contact, and of the 52 (13.7%) cat contacts, 36 (69.2%) also had rat and/or mice contact.

Discussion

Leptospirosis continues to be increasingly responsible for ill health, affecting people employed in a wide range of occupations and activities, some of which are not traditionally associated with the disease in Australia. The large increase in notifications in Queensland during this period could be explained by high and consistent rainfall and reported increases in rodent numbers. Leptospirosis is still under-reported with greater awareness of the disease needed in children at the initial clinical assessment. Children accounted for at least 5% of leptospirosis notifications in Australia. The agricultural industry continues to emerge as the major national source of notifications along with the dairy and meatworking industries. While rats and mice are recognised sources of infection worldwide, the real public health risk associated with dogs has yet to be fully determined. To date the reference laboratory has not been able to recover leptospires from the urine of dogs, with the only isolation of Leptospira being from blood. It is possible that dogs in Australia do not have a role as maintenance hosts, or that local serovars are not yet canine-adapted. More detailed investigations into clinical aspects of each case and its sources of infection will further enhance our understanding of the health impact of the disease, indicate improvements to management of the patient in our hospital and medical systems, and assist in the implementation of effective control and preventative measures.

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