

Cryptococcosis

Cryptococcus neoformans has long been identified in humans with immunosuppressive conditions, especially AIDS. Before 1999, *Cryptococcus gattii* (*C. gattii*) infection seemed to be pretty much limited to the tropics. During 1999, *C. gattii* began appearing in animals and humans on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada. Beginning in 2004, it started appearing among mainland British Columbia residents who had no exposure to Vancouver Island. In December 2004, a case of human *C. gattii* infection was reported in Oregon, associated with an outbreak on Vancouver Island and in mainland British Columbia. Infection by *Cryptococcus* became officially reportable in Oregon on August 19, 2011.

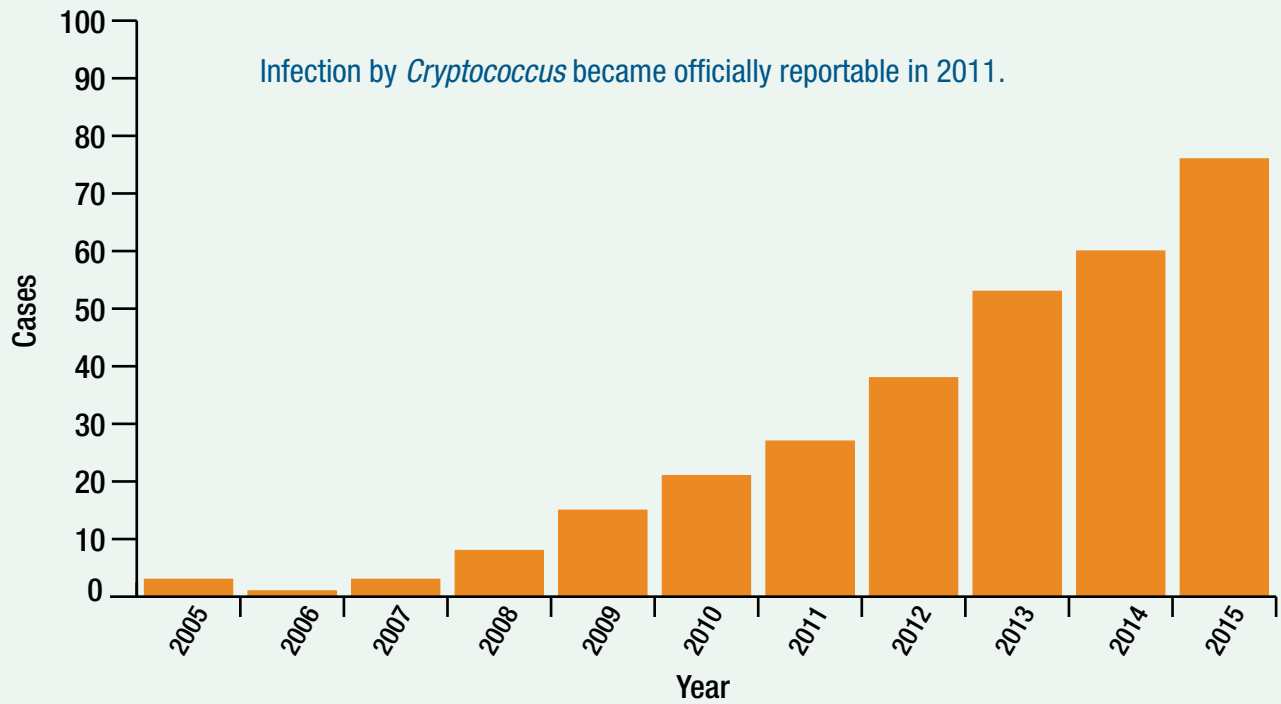
Seventy-six cases occurred among Oregon residents in 2015. The most common infection was *C. neoformans* (18), followed by *C. gattii* (14).

Studies from British Columbia and elsewhere showed a median incubation period of 6–7 months, with a range of 2–13 months. In addition to testing human specimens, we also test animals and environments where animals are infected with *C. gattii* to localize the environmental reservoirs (they travel less than humans). The bottom line is *C. gattii* appears to be established in Oregon soil and serves as a source of infection. There is no potential for zoonotic transmission.

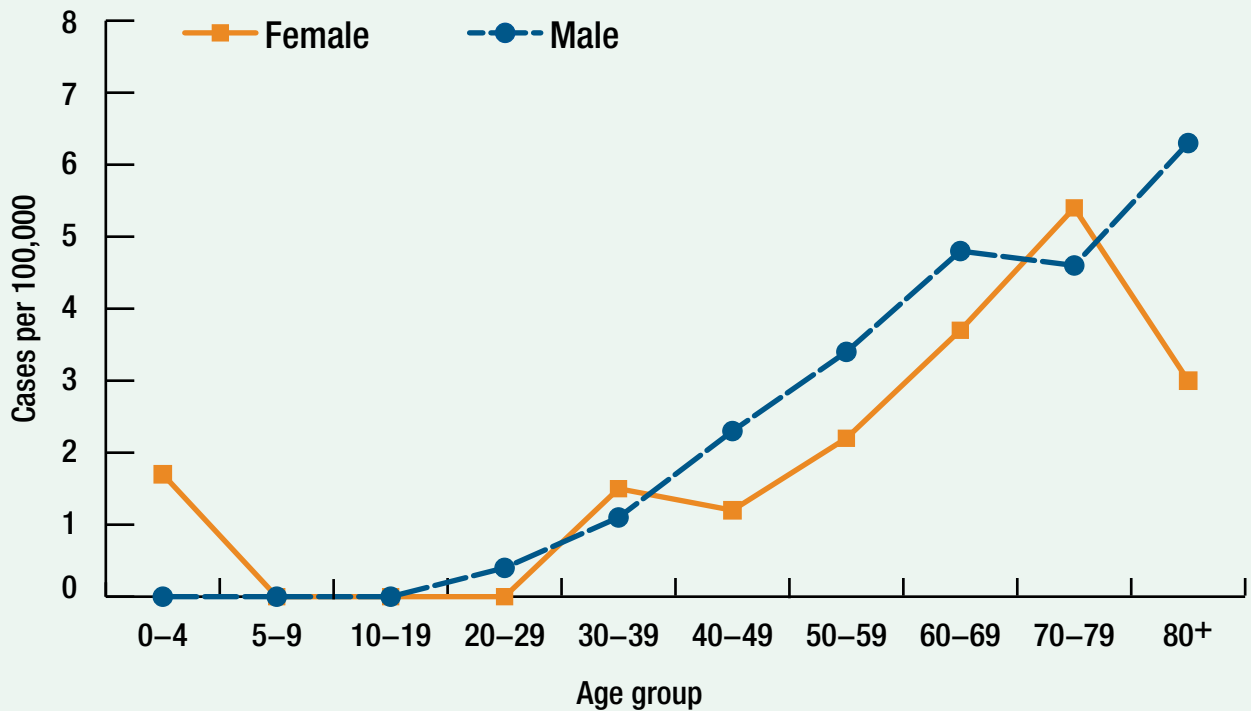
Previously healthy persons appear to be at low risk. Most infections are among immunocompromised or chronically ill persons. Over the last few years, detection of cryptococcal infection has changed from culturing the organism to the use of cryptococcal antigen making it impossible to further our knowledge of the epidemiology of *Cryptococcus gattii*. Treatment with extended use of antifungal agents (six months or longer) is recommended. For current treatment information, see guidelines published by the Infectious Disease Society of America:

<http://www.idsociety.org/Index.aspx>

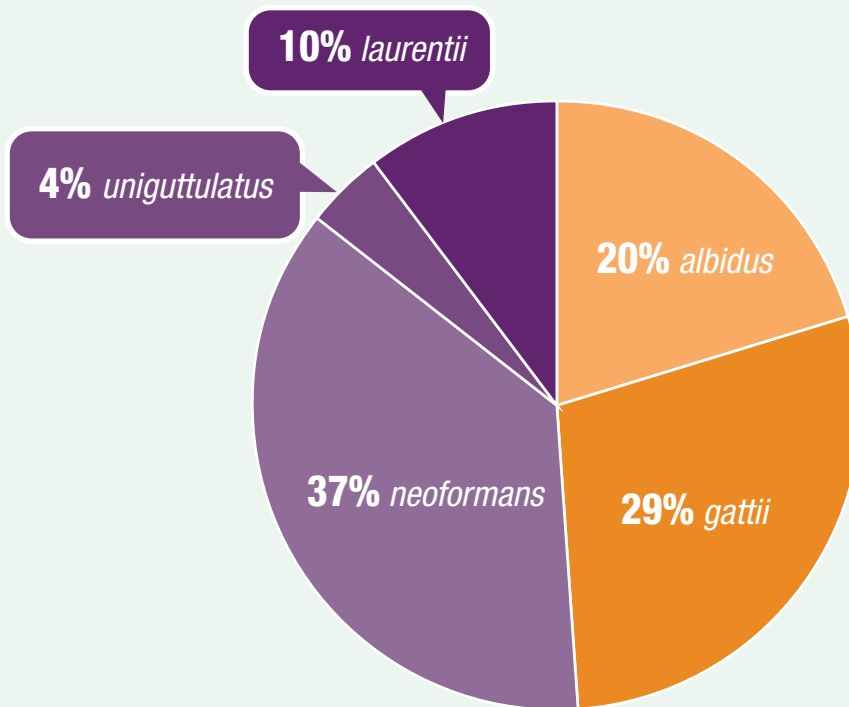
Cryptococcosis by year: Oregon, 2005–2015



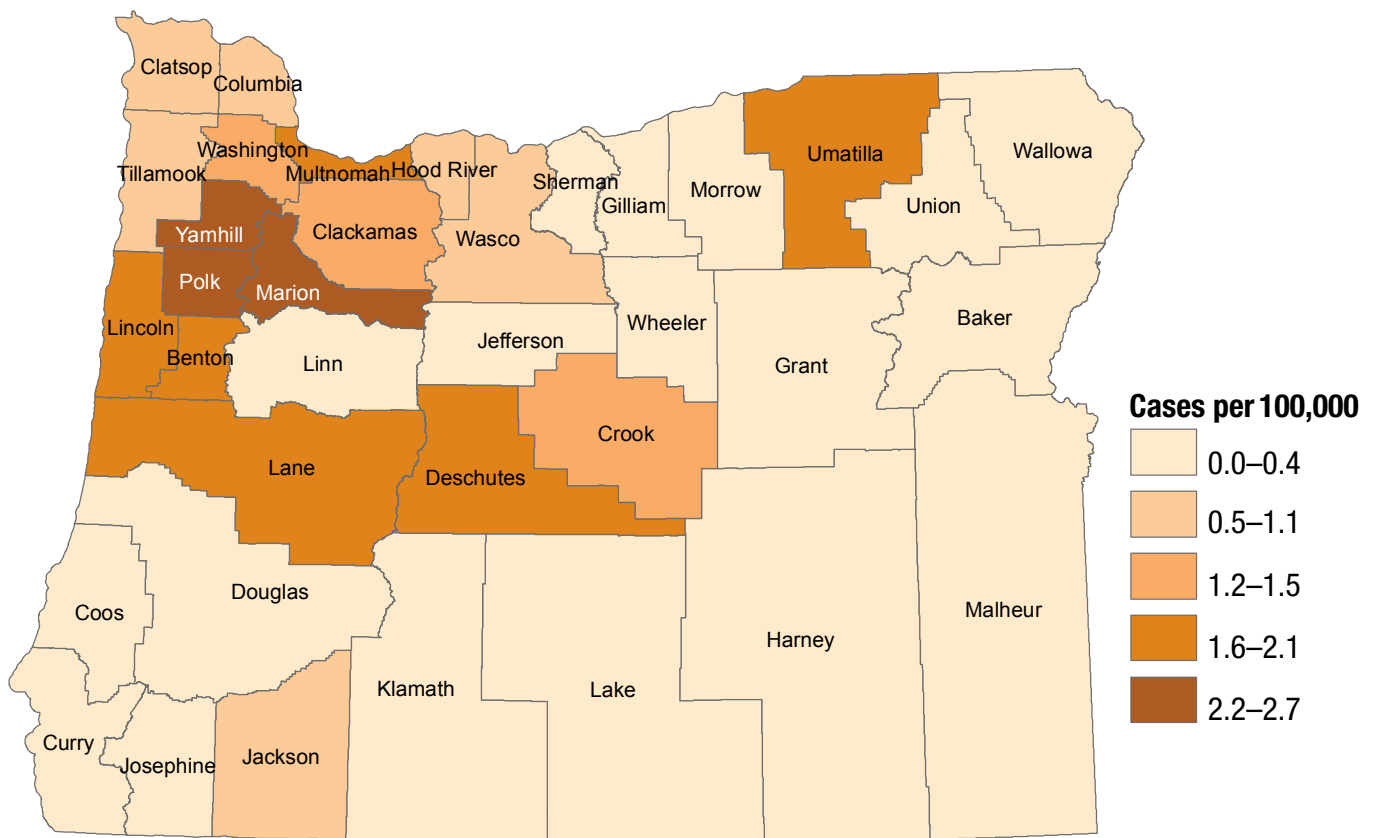
Cryptococcosis by age and sex: Oregon, 2015



Cryptococcosis by species: Oregon, 2015



Incidence of cryptococcosis by county of residence: Oregon, 2012–2015



Prevention

- Regrettably, practical methods for preventing cryptococcosis have not been identified.
- Patients with cryptococcosis can be helped with early diagnosis and treatment with antifungal drugs.