

The following is a statement from Dr. Rosario Trifiletti regarding the LeRoy cases:

STATEMENT ON LEROY, NY CLUSTER

I have now had the opportunity to review laboratory data collected in a standardized fashion on eight of the nine girls I examined in Leroy, NY on 1/29/12. Five of eight girls show evidence of carriage of Streptococcus Pyogenes and seven of eight show evidence of infection with Mycoplasma Pneumonia. All eight girls tested show evidence of infection with at least one of these pathogens. Both of these agents have been associated with a PANDAS-like illness with the sudden onset of motor and vocal tics. Thus, a PANDAS-like illness is my working diagnosis, rather than a mass conversion disorder.

These findings provide a significant clue in the Leroy High School mystery, but certainly many questions remain. Streptococcus Pyogenes and Mycoplasma Pneumonia are common pathogens that children throughout the world are exposed to every day. Why this town? Why this particular child and not another? Why such a curious presentation resembling Tourette syndrome? Until these questions are fully answered, the cluster will remain a mystery. I suspect that genetic, environmental factors provide an immune background where the PANDAS-like response is possible to common pathogens. The infectious exposure is simply “the straw that broke the camel’s back”. However, the infectious exposure points the way to rational medical treatment for these children, which is of immediate importance. Such treatment, which involves antibiotics and anti-inflammatory agents, has already begun. Clearly, response to such treatment will be helpful in supporting my working diagnosis.

As with most illnesses, there is a complex interplay of genetic and environmental factors here. As with all illnesses, psychological factors likely play some role as well. All we have done here is provided evidence for exposure to two infectious agents as potential environmental factors. I would encourage efforts to further explore genetic and other environmental factors that likely are playing an additional role here.