

WORK-RELATED MRSA CC398 CARRIER STATUS HAD SERIOUS PSYCHOSOCIAL CONSEQUENCES TO A FARMER

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In March 2014 a 30 year old swine farmer was referred to the Department of Occupational Medicine Aalborg, Denmark. Within the last 5 years he had been colonized by Livestock-associated meticillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) CC398 and in March 2013 it was detected in an abscess. The National Board of Industrial Injuries sanctioned MRSA-infection as a work related condition.

BACKGROUND

In Denmark reported MRSA CC398 cases has increased from 643 in 2013 to 1276 in 2014. MRSA CC398 now represent 43% of the total number of reported MRSA cases. Of the cases, 89% were found in persons with direct contact to swine, or in their household.

From 2007 to 2013 there have been 7 cases of MRSA CC398 positive bacteraemia. Of these, 3 died within 30 days. In the first three quarters of 2014, further 6 cases of MRSA CC398 positive bacteraemia, of which two died within 30 days. [1]

Figure 1

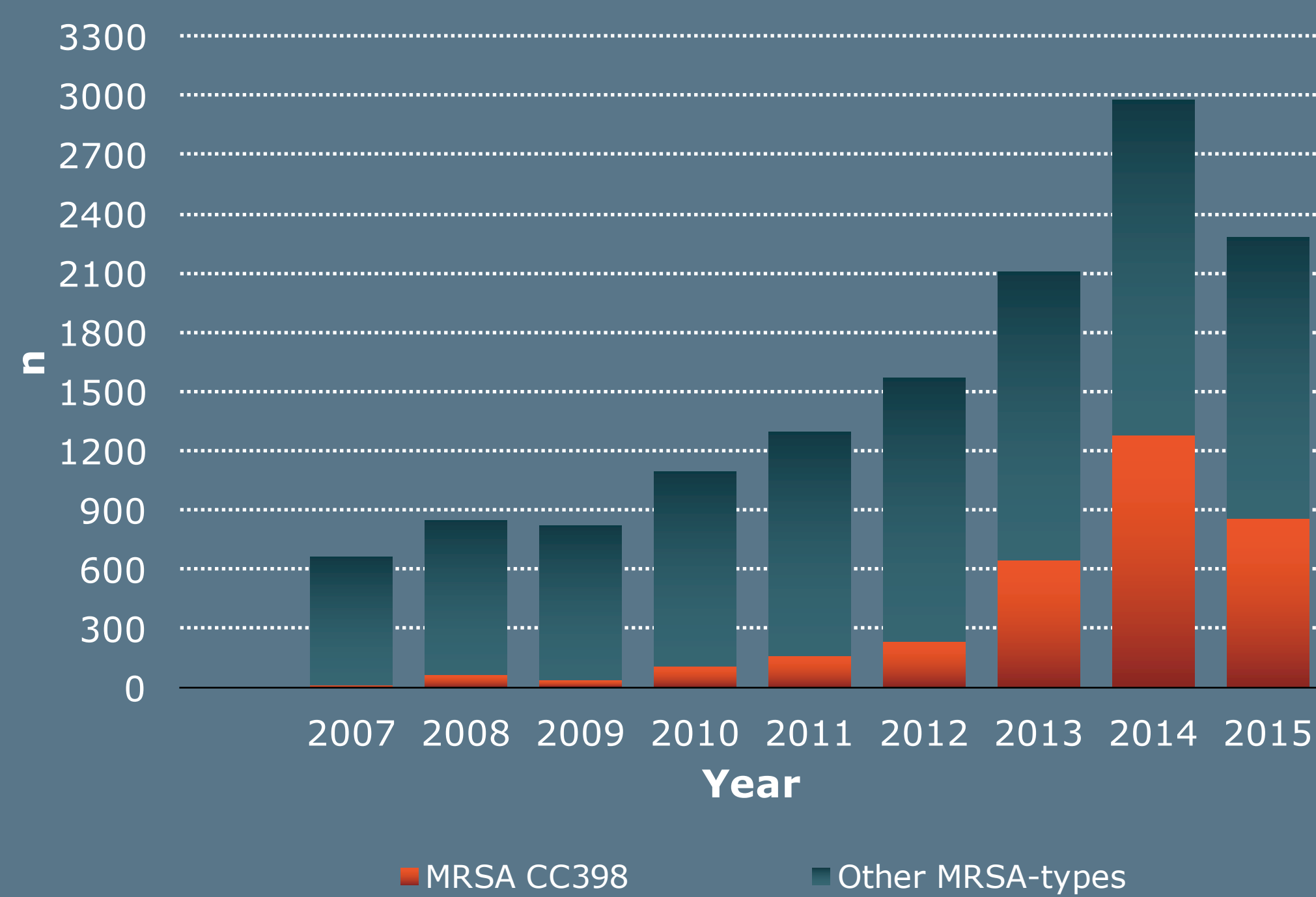


Figure 1
Identified cases of MRSA-carrier state from 2007 to the first three quarters of 2015 [2]

CASE STORY

The fear of Livestock associated MRSA in the public and the media can have widely psychosocial consequences for farmers and their employees. This is a story of one of these cases.

In 2012 a farmer was working as a manager at a pig farm. The farm became aware of MRSA CC398 transmission when four employees, the farmer and his girlfriend were tested positive.

On four occasions in 2012 and three in 2013, the farmer's pregnant girlfriend, without direct contact to swine, was found MRSA CC398 positive. External eradication with nasal mupirocin 3 times a day and body wash with soap containing chlorhexidine gluconate failed and peroral eradication was postponed due to pregnancy. She was later tested MRSA-negative in 2014.

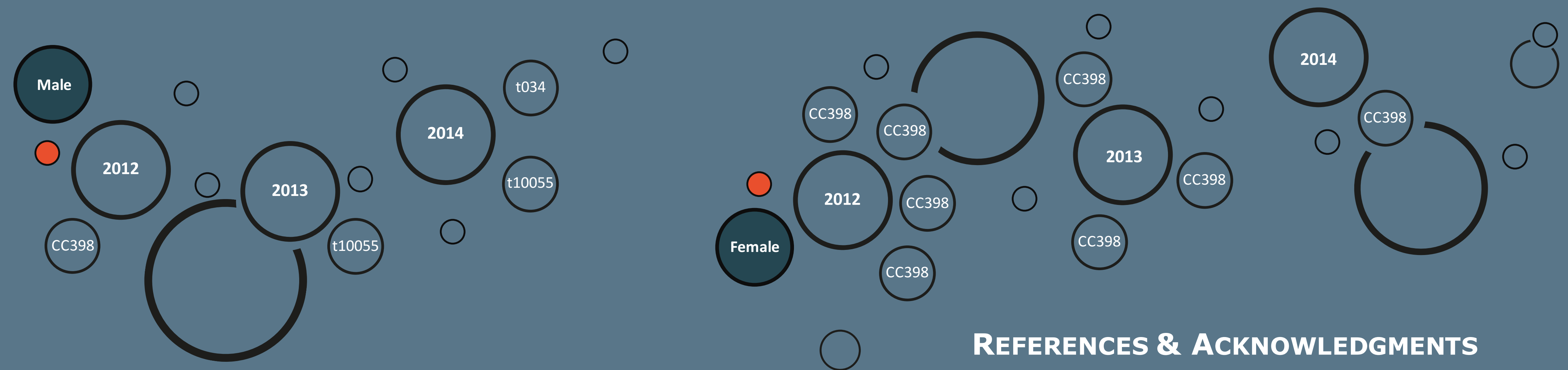
The farmer was tested twice in 2014 and in both occasions positive. The external eradication failed but through succesfull peroral eradication with clarithromycin 500mg twice a day, he was later in 2014 found MRSA-negative.



CONCLUSION

The cases describes some of the challenges farms may encounter while working with MRSA CC398 positive livestock. It describes difficulties eradicating MRSA CC398 both for the exposed and to their families.

Farmers may need proper informations on sick leave or vocational guidance. It illustrates the consequences with discrepancy between perceived information and experienced management



When his girlfriend became pregnant again the farmer feared transmitting MRSA CC398 to her and he developed stress related symptoms like insomnia, feelings of guilt, anxiousness and easy to tears. The symptoms led to sick leave and psychotherapy. He decided to terminate his career as a farmer.

He described contradicting treatments in the health care system. On one hand he was informed that MRSA CC398 did not pose any risk neither towards his pregnant girlfriend nor to his child. On the other hand he experienced isolation, personal protection equipment and fearfull reactions from the medical staff.

The National Board of Industrial Injuries sanctioned MRSA-infection as a work related condition, but declined the stress reaction as one.

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