***Legionella pneumophila* found in windscreen washer fluid without added screenwash**

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A paper by Wallensten et al. [1] identified an epidemiological association between Legionnaires' disease cases and the absence of screenwash in windscreen washer fluid and a follow up pilot study had identified *Legionella* species in one vehicle. The research extrapolated that as many as 20 % of sporadic community acquired cases may be attributed to this exposure and prevention by the use of screenwash could be readily achieved and could theoretically prevent 50 United Kingdom (UK) cases each year. However, *Legionella pneumophila* has never been grown from windscreen washer fluid and it is not known whether or not screenwash inhibits or prevents growth of *Legionella*. We undertook an open cross-sectional study aiming to investigate whether *L. pneumophila* can be detected in vehicle windscreen washer fluid reservoirs and to establish whether or not the addition of screenwash can inhibit the growth of *L. pneumophila* and at what concentration. 30 vehicles were sampled, six of which had no screenwash added and 24 used screenwash. *L. pneumophila* serogroup 1 was not detected in any of the cars with screenwash but

was found in one of the other vehicles. The level of contamination was 6,000 colony forming units per litre (cfu/l). The positive vehicle was unusual in that it had *never* had screenwash added to it. Subsequently, a laboratory-based experimental study was also undertaken to see if screenwash had a bactericidal effect on *Legionella*. Standard screenwash was found to be effective against *Legionella* at very low concentrations (10 ppm). This is the first time that *L. pneumophila* has been identified in windscreen washer fluid and the first time that screenwash has been shown to be effective against its growth.

References

1. Wallensten A, Oliver I, Ricketts K, Kafatos G, Stuart JM, Joseph C. Windscreen wiper fluid without added screenwash in motor vehicles: a newly identified risk factor for Legionnaires' disease. Eur J Epidemiol. 2010;25:661–5. doi:[10.1007/s10654-010-9471-3](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10654-010-9471-3).

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