

## Poisonous Spider Bites Vineyard Worker<sup>1</sup>

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California NURSE Project<sup>2</sup>

### SUMMARY : CASE 192-028-001

A farm laborer was working in a vineyard, cleaning weeds away from the base of the grape vines with a shovel. He bent under the vines to check his work and was bitten on the left side of the neck by a spider. The spider may have been a Brown Recluse [1] or another poisonous spider. Fifteen minutes after the bite the worker began to feel dizzy and sick to his stomach. The employer drove the worker to a hospital emergency department, where the worker was treated and released.

How could this injury have been prevented?

- Check before working under vines and other hidden areas for spiders, yellow jackets, rattlesnakes, and other poisonous insects or animals.
- One person at the work site should be trained in first aid. The worker could have had a bad reaction to the spider bite.
- Call 911 (emergency services) for poisonous insect bites and stings.

The NURSE (Nurses Using Rural Sentinel Events) project is conducted by the California Occupational Health Program of the California Department of Health Services, in conjunction with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. The program's goal is to prevent occupational injuries associated with agriculture. Injuries are reported by hospitals, emergency medical services, clinics, medical examiners, and coroners. Selected cases are followed up by conducting interviews of injured workers, co-workers, employers, and others involved in the incident. An on-site safety investigation is also conducted. These investigations provide detailed information on the worker, the work environment, and the potential risk factors resulting in the injury. Each investigation concludes with specific recommendations

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1. This document, CDHS(COHP)-FI-92-005-09, was extracted from a series of the Nurses Using Rural Sentinel Events (NURSE) project, conducted by the California Occupational Health Program of the California Department of Health Services, in conjunction with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. Publication date: May 1992.

2. NURSE Project, California Occupational Health Program, 2151 Berkeley Way, Annex 11, Berkeley, CA 94704.

[1] This note added by NASD editorial staff March 31, 2009:

Although the Brown Recluse spider is suggested as being responsible for the bite suffered by the vineyard worker, it is now well established that the Brown Recluse spider is not established in California, and it is most unlikely to have caused the bite described. A more likely identification, according to Rick Vetter of the University of California, Riverside, Department of Entomology, is the Bold Jumping Spider or the immature Black Widow spider. Brown Recluses can be specifically eliminated from this identification because they are found in tree trunks, under rocks, and in similar habitats, and not in vegetation. Also, Brown Recluses never have red on their bodies at any time in their life cycle. For additional information about spiders in California, visit the Spider Web page of the University of California, Riverside [apply the following link to "Spider Web page of the University of California": <http://spiders.ucr.edu/>]. For additional information about the Brown Recluse spider, consult the fact sheet from the Ohio State University [apply the following link to "fact sheet from the Ohio State University": <http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/2000/2061.html>].