

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (7) in DH SEB CD/8/6/1 III

來函檔號 Your Ref :

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23 March 2005

Dear Doctor,

Update on Avian Influenza H5N1

As of today, the World Health Organization (WHO) has reported a total of 69 human cases of H5N1 infection, including 51 cases (33 deaths) in Vietnam, 17 cases (12 deaths) in Thailand and 1 fatal case from Cambodia. These cases have occurred in three waves: from January to March 2004, from August to October 2004 and from late December 2004 to present. In the recent third wave, there were 24 human cases reported in Vietnam (13 deaths) and 1 fatal case reported in Cambodia. New outbreaks of H5N1 infection among poultry continued to be reported from Vietnam and Thailand. Recently, poultry outbreaks of H5N1 infection were also reported from Indonesia.

There was a media report yesterday (March 22) about an influenza epidemic in central Quang Binh Province (Chau Hoa commune) of Vietnam affecting 200 people, and that a 5-year-old boy in the same commune was tested positive for avian influenza H5N1 last week. According to the report, the boy's 13-year-old sister died on 9 March without confirmatory test.

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) has been contacting the WHO and Vietnamese authority to verify this report. Official confirmation is pending. Although it is flu season in Northern Hemisphere countries, it would be prudent to step up our precautionary measures.



If you come across patients presenting with pneumonia or influenza-like illness within 7 days returning from countries reporting recent cases of avian influenza (e.g., Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia), please enquire history of exposure to poultry, as well as contact with persons suffering from influenza symptoms. Please also advise patients who are traveling: (a) to avoid visiting farm; (b) to avoid contact with live poultry/birds; (c) to wash hands thoroughly after contact with live poultry/birds, and (d) to consult a doctor if they develop symptoms during or after traveling.

Influenza A (H5), Influenza A (H7) and Influenza A (H9) are statutorily notifiable diseases in Hong Kong. Cases meeting the reporting criteria (Annex) should be reported to the Central Notification Office of CHP via fax (24772770), phone (24772772) or CENO On-line (www.chp.gov.hk/ceno). Please also refer the patients meeting the reporting criteria to the hospital for further clinical management and investigation.

Yours sincerely,



(Dr. Thomas TSANG)

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Criteria for reporting

(a) Person with acute respiratory illness, characterized by fever (temperature > 38°C) and cough and/or sore throat, **AND EITHER**

- contact with a case of Influenza A (H5), Influenza A (H7) or Influenza A (H9) during the infectious period, **OR**
- recent (less than 1 week) visit to poultry farm in an area known to have outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), **OR**
- worked in a laboratory that is processing samples from persons or animals that are suspected from HPAI infection

OR

(b) Person with severe pneumonia caused by Influenza A (e.g. Directigen test positive for Influenza A) **AND** had contact with live birds/poultry within 1 week before onset of illness

OR

(c) Death from an unexplained acute respiratory illness **AND EITHER**

- residing in area where HPAI is suspected or confirmed, **OR**
- contact with a case of Influenza A (H5), Influenza A (H7) or Influenza A (H9) during the infectious period