

監測及流行病學處



Surveillance
And
Epidemiology
Branch

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27 October 2005

Dear Doctor,

An Update of Avian Influenza H5N1

Subsequent to my letter dated 22 September 2005, I am writing to provide an update on the latest situation of avian influenza infections in human and poultry populations, as well as to solicit your assistance in offering health advice to your clients on the proper use of antiviral drugs and adherence to good personal and environmental hygiene to prevent avian influenza and other infectious diseases.

Since December 2003, World Health Organization (WHO) has reported a total of 121 human cases of H5N1 infection, including 19 cases (13 deaths) in Thailand, 7 cases (4 deaths) in Indonesia, 91 cases (41 deaths) in Viet Nam and 4 cases (4 deaths) in Cambodia. The recent cases were reported in Thailand [father (M/48) and son (M/7)] and Indonesia (M/23 and M/7) during 19 October and 24 October 2005. The father and son in Thailand had common exposure to sick poultry while defeathering them. At present, WHO is of the view that human-to-human transmission of H5N1 is still limited and inefficient.

Incidents of highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5) infection among migratory birds and poultry were reported in Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Russia, Turkey, Romania, Croatia, Thailand and China (Anhui and Hunan provinces) in the past few weeks. World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) was well informed of the situation in these countries and relevant public health measures have been implemented.



衛生防護中心乃衛生署
轄下執行疾病預防
及控制的專業架構
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Protection is a
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The Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases (SCEZD) formed under the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) has published its recommendations on the use of antiviral drugs in March 2005. In addition, a general guide to doctors on the treatment and prophylactic use of antiviral drugs was published in June 2005. These guidelines are available at CHP's website at <http://www.chp.gov.hk>. The Government does not recommend members of the public to buy antiviral drugs to keep at home. Using of antiviral drugs without doctors' professional advice greatly increases the chance of antiviral resistance emerging.

The best way to protect oneself against avian influenza or pandemic influenza is to practise good personal and environmental hygiene as well as healthy lifestyle. Frequent handwashing is paramount. Members of the public are advised to stock up several weeks' supplies of masks, thermometers, tissue papers, liquid soap and disinfectants at home. When pandemic influenza arrives, public should avoid attending crowded and under-ventilated places, reduce necessary social contact and maintain good immune system through regular exercise and adequate rest.

Government has put in place a contingency plan for pandemic influenza. We have convened some open forums to introduce the Government's preparedness for pandemic influenza and valuable comments and opinions from public and healthcare sectors have been received. We will continue our work in liaising with stakeholders and the general community in order to make all of us get well prepared.

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 (2477 2770), phone (2477 2772) or CENO On-line (www.chp.gov.hk/ceno). Please also refer patients meeting the reporting criteria to hospital for further clinical management and investigation.

Yours sincerely,



(Dr. Thomas TSANG)

Consultant Community Medicine (Communicable Disease)
Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health

Criteria for reporting

(a) Person with acute respiratory illness, characterized by fever (temperature $>38^{\circ}\text{C}$) 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 a poultry farm/zoo 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