

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (201) in DH SEB CD/8/27/1 Pt.21

July 17, 2017

Dear Doctor,

Alert on Sharp Increase in Activity of Seasonal Influenza

I would like to update you on the latest activity of seasonal influenza in Hong Kong. Hong Kong has entered the summer influenza season in mid-May 2017. The surveillance data of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health showed that the local influenza activity has been increasing markedly in the past two weeks and has reached a very high level. We foresee that the influenza activity will remain at a high level in the coming weeks.

Among the respiratory specimens received by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the CHP, the percentage tested positive for influenza viruses rose from 20.76% in the week ending June 24 to 31.48% and 35.66% in the weeks ending July 1 and July 8 respectively. The seasonal influenza viruses detected between June 18 and July 8 were mainly A(H3N2) (91.3%), followed by A(H1N1)pdm09 (5.0%) and B (2.9%).

The number of outbreaks of influenza-like illness (ILI) in institutions and schools reported to the CHP has also increased in the past few weeks. It rose from 30 outbreaks in the week ending June 24 to a range of 41 and 44 outbreaks per week in the past three weeks (June 25 – July 15). In the past three weeks, the ILI outbreaks occurred in residential care homes for the elderly (52.0%), kindergartens/child care centres (22.8%), primary schools (11.8%), secondary schools (2.4%), residential care homes for the disabled (2.4%), and other institutions (8.7%).

In public hospitals, the admission rates with principal diagnosis of influenza



have significantly increased recently. The influenza admission rate among children aged below 5 years has increased from 3.18 admitted cases per 10,000 population in the week ending June 24 to 6.83 in that ending July 8. The rate among elderly aged 65 years or above has increased from 2.17 to 3.93 in the corresponding period.

Since the activation of the enhanced surveillance for influenza-associated intensive care unit (ICU) admissions and deaths among adult patients on May 5, 2017, a total of 270 severe cases (including 183 deaths) were recorded (as of July 16). Separately, 13 cases of paediatric influenza-associated complication/death (including three deaths) were recorded in the same period. In the past week (July 10-16), an average of 10.6 severe cases per day was recorded among all ages.

Private doctors are reminded to continue to report patients aged 18 years or above requiring ICU admission or died AND had any positive laboratory results of influenza infection to the CHP through the infection control officer, infection control nurse or designated responsible officer in the respective hospital on a daily basis. For patients admitted to public hospitals, the CHP has collaborated with the Hospital Authority Head Office to exchange the data on ICU admissions and deaths with laboratory confirmation of influenza infection.

In addition, all doctors in both public and private sectors are reminded to continue to report any paediatric patients who fulfill the reporting criteria for severe paediatric influenza-associated with complication/death to the Central Notification Office (CENO) of the CHP by fax (2477 2770), by phone (2477 2772), or via the CENO On-line website (https://cdis.chp.gov.hk/CDIS_CENO_ONLINE/ceno.html). The reporting criteria and forms are available on the CENO On-line website. Please call our Medical Control Officer (pager: 7116 3300 call 9179) when reporting during non-office hours.

Please remind your patients to observe strict hand, personal and environmental hygiene amid the influenza season. Apart from adopting personal, hand and environmental hygiene practices against respiratory illnesses, persons aged six months or above who have not received the 2016/17 influenza vaccine may still get the vaccination as soon as possible for personal protection.

The latest surveillance data on influenza and severe cases are published in the “*Flu Express*”, a weekly report available on the CHP website (http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/guideline1_year/29/134/441/304.html). Further information on influenza can be found from the following link: http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/14843.html. Please draw the attention of the healthcare professionals and supporting staff in your institution/ working with you to the above. May I take this opportunity to thank you for your continuous support in combating infectious diseases in Hong Kong.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read 'SK Chuang', is positioned above the printed name.

(Dr. SK Chuang)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health