

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (79) in DH SEB CD/8/6/1 Pt.27

17 April, 2013

Dear Managers / Infection Control Officers,

Latest Situation on Avian Influenza A(H7N9)

Further to our letter to you dated 5 April 2013, we would like to provide you with the latest situation on avian influenza A(H7N9).

As of 16 April 2013, 77 cases of human infection caused by the avian influenza A(H7N9) virus have been reported by the National Health and Family Planning Commission (NHFPC) in Anhui Province (3 cases including 1 death), Beijing Municipality (1 case), Henan Province (2 cases), Jiangsu Province (20 cases including 2 deaths), Shanghai Municipality (30 cases including 11 deaths) and Zhejiang Province (21 cases including 2 deaths) since 31 March 2013. According to available information, the onset dates of these cases were between 19 February and 12 April 2013. Sixteen patients died (case-fatality ratio=21%), more than 80% were severe cases. The median age was 63 years with a range between 4 and 87 years; 21 of them were females.

According to the latest risk assessment by NHFPC, the H7N9 virus is of avian origin and people are mainly infected through exposure to infected poultry or its contaminated environment. Hence, contact with infected poultry or visiting wet markets with live poultry are important risk factors of human infection caused by the avian influenza A(H7N9) virus.

To prevent avian influenza, please kindly remind your children/ staff to **avoid visiting wet markets with live poultry or contacting poultry especially when travelling to affected areas, always observe strict hand hygiene and avoid touching mouth, nose or eyes**. Wash hands frequently with liquid soap, especially before handling food or eating, after going to toilet, or when hands are dirtied by respiratory secretion after coughing or sneezing. In addition, the following measures are also advised:



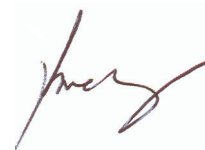
- Avoid touching poultry, birds or their droppings, because infected poultry, birds or their droppings may carry the avian influenza virus;
- Wash hands thoroughly with liquid soap and water immediately in case of contact with poultry, birds or their droppings;
- Cover nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing. Dispose sputum or secretions wrapped in tissue paper into rubbish bins with lids. Wash hands with liquid soap and water afterwards;
- Build up good body resistance and have a healthy lifestyle. This can be achieved through a balanced diet, regular exercise, adequate rest, reducing stress and no smoking;
- Poultry and eggs should be thoroughly cooked before eating;
- Maintain good environmental hygiene;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Avoid crowded places with poor ventilation if feeling unwell; and
- Seek medical advice if fever or respiratory symptoms develop.

For clients/ staff with recent history of travel (especially to affected areas with avian influenza cases) and have contact with poultry or history of visiting wet markets with live poultry, they should wear a mask and consult doctors promptly if they have flu-like symptoms, and inform the doctor of their exposure history. The affected clients/ staff should avoid returning to the institution. You may wish to note that CHP has issued guidelines to residential care homes for the elderly and residential care homes for persons with disabilities on prevention of communicable diseases which can be accessed at (<http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/grp-elderly-en-20071227.pdf> and http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/guideline_prevention_of_communicable_diseases_rchd_full_eng.pdf) respectively.

If you notice any increase in respiratory illnesses or absenteeism among clients or staff, please report to our Central Notification Office (Tel: 2477 2772; Fax: 2477 2770) for immediate epidemiological investigations and outbreak control.

More information on avian Influenza is available at CHP website (<http://www.chp.gov.hk>).

Yours faithfully,



(Dr. SK CHUANG)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health