

監測及流行病學處



Surveillance
And
Epidemiology
Branch

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Dear Doctors,

H5 influenza infection in Vietnam

We would like to draw your attention to the three fatal cases due to H5 influenza infection in Vietnam reported on 12 August 2004 by WHO. The three cases were among a group of patients admitted to hospitals in Vietnam between 19 July and 8 August. Two of these fatal cases occurred in the northern Ha Tay Province. The third one was in the southern province of Hau Giang. These came after the reports that new outbreaks have been occurring in poultry populations in Vietnam since July this year. Further details can be found at the WHO website: http://www.who.int/csr/don/2004_08_12/en/.

Avian influenza (A/H5N1) has been known to infect humans in 1997 while 18 cases including 6 deaths were identified in Hong Kong. From January to March 2004, WHO recorded 34 laboratory-confirmed human infections, including 23 fatal cases, of influenza A (H5N1) in Vietnam and Thailand. These human cases coincided with the period when there were outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza found in the poultry population. So far, the available investigations suggested that the main mode of transmission is from bird-to-man. Man-to-man transmission remains inefficient and rare.

In view of the human cases of avian influenza H5 in Vietnam, you may wish to consider this as a differential diagnosis for patients with acute respiratory illness, characterized by fever (temperature $>38^{\circ}\text{C}$) **and** cough and/or sore throat, and have visited poultry farms in Vietnam. Please also advise patients who are travelling : (a) to avoid contact with live poultry/birds; (b) to wash hands thoroughly after contact with live poultry/birds, and (c) to consult a doctor if they develop symptoms of influenza during or after travelling.



衛生防護中心乃衛生署
轄下執行疾病預防
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Influenza A (H5) has been a statutorily notifiable disease in Hong Kong since 30 January 2004. (Case definitions and reporting criteria as attached) Please send your notification on cases meeting the reporting criteria to the Central Notification Office of Centre for Health Protection at **Fax: 24772770** and **Tel: 24772772**.

Yours sincerely,

(Dr Teresa CHOI)

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Case definition for Influenza A (H5):

A person with

- positive viral culture for influenza A (H5), **OR**
- positive Polymerase Chain Reaction for Influenza A (H5), **OR**
- a \geq 4-fold rise in H5 specific antibody titre

Criteria for reporting:

1. A person with acute respiratory illness, characterized by fever (temperature $>$ 38°C)

and cough and/or sore throat, **AND** history of any of the following

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

OR

2. A 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