

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (14) in DH CDB/8/27/1 Pt. 24

11 January 2024

Dear Doctor,

Arrival of the 2023/24 Winter Influenza Season in Hong Kong

We would like to alert you that the local seasonal influenza activity continued to increase. It indicates that Hong Kong has entered the 2023/24 winter influenza season.

Latest surveillance data of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) showed that the weekly percentage of detections tested positive for seasonal influenza viruses rapidly increased in late December and reached 11.77% last week, exceeding the baseline threshold of 9.21%. Currently, the predominating circulating viruses are influenza A(H3). The overall admission rate with principal diagnosis of influenza in public hospitals also reached 0.68 per 10,000 population in the same week, which was above the baseline threshold of 0.25. The highest admission rates were observed with children aged 0-5 years and elders aged 65 years or above.

For the surveillance of influenza-associated admissions to intensive care unit (ICU) and deaths among patients aged ≥ 18 years, private medical practitioners are reminded to continue to report cases fulfilling the following criteria to the CHP through the infection control officer or designated responsible officer of the respective private hospital: ***adult patients (aged ≥ 18 years) who (i) required ICU admission or died; AND (ii) had any positive laboratory result of influenza infection.*** For patients admitted to public hospitals, the CHP has collaborated with the HA to retrieve the relevant data electronically. In addition, all doctors in both public and private sectors are reminded to continue to **report any paediatric patients who fulfil the reporting criteria for severe paediatric influenza-associated complication/death** to the CHP, with reporting criteria available at the CENO On-line website (https://cdis.chp.gov.hk/CDIS_CENO_ONLINE/ceno.html).



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
The Centre for Health
Protection is a
professional arm of the
Department of Health for
disease prevention and
control

Grateful if you could advise your patients who are aged six months or above especially the priority groups to receive the seasonal influenza vaccine

as soon as possible for personal protection. Moreover, you may consider empirical treatment with neuraminidase inhibitor (e.g. oseltamivir) for patients suspected to have influenza infection early based on clinical assessment, especially patients at higher risk of complications, such as young children, elders, people with chronic diseases, pregnant women, etc. Studies have shown that neuraminidase inhibitors can reduce severe outcomes of influenza. We would like to draw your attention to HA's internal clinical guideline on "Use of neuraminidase inhibitors in out-patient settings" (<http://icidportal.ha.org.hk/Home/File?path=/Use%20of%20neuraminidase%20inhibitors%20in%20out-patient%20settings.pdf>).

The latest surveillance data on seasonal influenza are published in the weekly "*COVID-19 & Flu Express*" at the CHP website (<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/resources/29/100148.html>) and more information on influenza can be found at <https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/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 dark ink, appearing to be 'SK CHUANG', written in a cursive style.

(Dr SK CHUANG)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health