

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (29) in DH CDB/8/27/1 Pt. 24

2 May 2024

Dear Doctor,

**Update on increased Seasonal Influenza Activity in Hong Kong**

Following our previous letter dated 11 January 2024, we would like to update you on the latest activity of seasonal influenza. Hong Kong has entered the winter influenza season since early January this year. The local seasonal influenza activity persists at a high level with recent increase, and we anticipate that the current influenza season would persist for a period of time.

Latest surveillance data of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) showed that the weekly percentage of detections tested positive for seasonal influenza viruses further increased to 10.63% last week and the overall admission rate with principal diagnosis of influenza in public hospitals also remained at a high level of 0.70 per 10,000 population. Currently, the circulating influenza viruses were predominately influenza A(H1), showing a shift from influenza A(H3) which was the dominating virus during January to March this year. The current influenza season is expected to persist for a period of time and more outbreaks and severe cases might be recorded in the upcoming weeks.

As of 1 May, a total of 587 adult cases of ICU admission/death with laboratory confirmation of influenza (including 361 deaths) have been recorded in the current season. For children, 22 cases of paediatric influenza-associated severe complication/death have been recorded in this season, in which three of them were fatal.

For the surveillance of influenza-associated admissions to intensive care unit (ICU) and deaths among patients aged  $\geq 18$  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  $\geq 18$  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](https://cdis.chp.gov.hk/CDIS_CENO_ONLINE/ceno.html)).

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" (<https://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,



(Dr SK CHUANG)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection  
Department of Health