

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (13) in DH SEB CD/8/27/1 Pt.19

18 March 2010

Dear Doctor,

**Arrival of the Peak Season for Influenza and Increase in RSV Activity in
Hong Kong**

I would like to update you on the latest situation of seasonal influenza activity in the community.

Most recent data from the influenza surveillance systems of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) showed an increasing number of influenza isolates, which signal that Hong Kong has entered the traditional peak season for seasonal influenza. There has been a steady increase in the number of influenza viruses detected from respiratory specimens at the Public Health Laboratory Centre (PHLC) of the CHP, from 85 in the week ending February 27 to 177 in the week ending March 6 and 268 in the week ending March 13. In the most recent two weeks (February 28 – March 13), human swine influenza virus and seasonal influenza B virus each constituted 49% of all the influenza isolates while seasonal influenza A (H3N2) virus accounted for only 0.7%. The circulating influenza B virus was mainly B/ Victoria/2/87 lineage virus. The currently used seasonal influenza vaccine for the 2009-2010 northern hemisphere influenza season is expected to confer certain cross protection against this influenza B virus. All the influenza B and influenza A (H3N2) viruses tested remained sensitive to oseltamivir (Tamiflu) while only a very small number of HSI virus was resistant to oseltamivir.

Other surveillance indicators also showed increased seasonal influenza activities in the community. During the week ending March 13, the average consultation rate for influenza-like illness (ILI) among sentinel private doctors was 51.0 per 1,000 consultations. Besides, there has been increase in the number of institutional ILI outbreaks since March, from three ILI outbreaks in the week ending February 27 to 24 in the week ending March 13 and 31 in the first five days of the current week (March 14 – 18). Most (30/31) of the recently reported ILI outbreaks occurred in school settings.



At the same time, CHP's surveillance system also showed high seasonal activity of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). The number of RSV detections in the week ending March 13 was 134. The figure is consistent with the trend recorded in the past few years.

Members of the public are reminded to take the following measures to prevent influenza and other respiratory illnesses:

- To build up good body immunity by having a proper diet, regular exercise and adequate rest, reducing stress and avoiding smoking;
- To maintain good personal and environmental hygiene;
- To wash hands after sneezing, coughing or cleaning the nose;
- To maintain good ventilation; and
- To avoid visiting crowded places with poor ventilation.
- Children with acute febrile illness should not attend school till 48 hours post-defervescence.

You may wish to refer to the Swine and Seasonal Flu Monitor at the CHP website <http://www.chp.gov.hk>. You are also reminded to report respiratory illnesses outbreak occurring in institutional settings to our Central Notification Office (Tel: 2477-2772; Fax: 2477-2770; CENO On-line at <http://www.chp.gov.hk/ceno>) for prompt epidemiological investigations and control measures.

Yours faithfully,



(Dr SK CHUANG)
Consultant Community Medicine (Communicable Disease)
Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health