

12th May 2009, 7.00 pm

Human infections of influenza A (H1N1):

Perspective from WHO/Lao P.D.R. (update 10)

Highlights:

- Globally, there are 5251 confirmed human cases of influenza A (H1N1) with 17 confirmed cases from 5 countries in the Western Pacific Region
- First officially confirmed case in Thailand
- WHO advises ASEAN on Influenza A (H1N1)
- New epidemiological research on Influenza A (H1N1)
- Influenza catches on in the media: Special CNN report for travellers
- **There are no known suspected or confirmed human cases of influenza A (H1N1) in Lao PDR**

Current level of influenza pandemic alert

Influenza pandemic alert remains at phase 5.

For further clarification about pandemic phases please read:

http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/phase/en/index.html

Global situation

As of 06:00 GMT, 12 May 2009, 30 countries have officially reported 5251 cases of influenza A (H1N1) infection.

Mexico has reported 2059 laboratory confirmed human cases of infection, including 56 deaths. The United States has reported 2600 laboratory confirmed human cases, including three deaths. Canada has reported 330 laboratory confirmed human cases, including one death. Costa Rica has reported eight laboratory confirmed human cases, including one death.

The following countries have reported laboratory confirmed cases with no deaths - Argentina (1), Australia (1), Austria (1), Brazil (8), China (2, comprising 1 in China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and 1 in mainland China), Colombia (3), Denmark (1), El Salvador (4), France (13), Germany (12), Guatemala (1), Ireland (1), Israel (7), Italy (9), Japan (4), Netherlands (3), New Zealand (7), Norway (2), Panama (16), Poland (1), Portugal (1), Republic of Korea (3), Spain (95), Sweden (2), Switzerland (1), Thailand (1) and the United Kingdom (55).

Media reports indicate that there are three additional cases, one each in Thailand, Finland and Cuba. These have yet to be officially confirmed as of 06:00 GMT, 12 May 2009.

Western Pacific Region:

There are no known suspected or confirmed human cases of influenza A (H1N1) in Lao P.D.R.

- The confirmed case count in the Western Pacific is 17, with no deaths. New Zealand has 7 cases, Japan 4, The Republic of Korea 3, China 2 cases and Australia one.
- Two cases of confirmed Influenza A (H1N1) have been reported in the media in Thailand. Official confirmation is pending and will be conveyed in this update tomorrow.
- The number of confirmed cases and affected countries in the region is expected to rise.
- So far the H1N1 virus hasn't caused severe illness in the majority of its victims. But this could change as it is a new virus and could yet mutate into a more severe strain so monitoring is ongoing.

What is the WHO Lao PDR country office doing?

WHO continues to provide technical assistance to the Governments response efforts including today providing updated briefings to Field Epidemiology Trainees on the latest Influenza A (H1N1) epidemiological developments. They will provide ongoing assistance to the provincials on surveillance and response.

Emphasis on pandemic preparedness is being sustained by WHO and its counterparts and there has been an increased intensity of work with UN-system country-based groups on operational continuity planning. As part of this process, WHO came together with the UN Office of the Resident Coordinator to facilitate the UN Country Team Pandemic Influenza Table-top Simulation Exercise today.

Recommendations from the table-top simulation are being incorporated into revised UN Country Team's Pandemic Influenza Contingencies Plan and Business Operation Continuity Plan for Lao PDR. The changes will strengthen the UN Country Office's ability to continue operating and provide quality support to the government, stakeholders and staff throughout a pandemic.

WHO advises ASEAN 3+

The WHO Director General Margaret Chan and Assistant Director General Dr Koji Fukuda addressed the ASEAN 3+ meeting in Thailand on 7 May. Dr Fukuda described the current phase 5 status and implications of Phase 6, reiterated WHO's response and explained WHO's work with various advisory groups on science, epidemiology, antivirals, vaccine production issues.

New epidemiological research on Influenza A (H1N1)

Results of viral transmissibility modeling were reported in Science Express Journal on 11 May. Based on the model, the researchers found that transmissibility of the novel Influenza A (H1N1) is substantially higher than seasonal flu, but comparably lower than for previous influenza pandemics: www.scienceexpress.org / 11 May 2009

Influenza catches on in the media: Special CNN report for travellers

CNN Business Traveller with Richard Quest will examine Influenza A (H1N1) from a travel perspective.

Wed May 13: 1030, 1930 CET | 1630 HK; Sat May 16: 0930, 2000 CET | 1530 HK; Sun May 17: 0630, 1930 CET | 1230 HK; Mon May 18: 1100 HK

Where to get more information

During public health emergencies, it is important to seek accurate information about the situation. For official information on this evolving situation and for technical and communication guidance for health administrators, health professionals and the general public, please click on the following links:

WHO: <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html>
US CDC: http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/?s_cid=swineFlu_outbreak_internal_001
France: http://www.invs.sante.fr/derniere_minute/default.asp

In Lao PDR:

For the public:

National Avian and Human Influenza Coordination Office (NAHICO)
Hotline Telephone: 166
UN Lao website: www.unlao.org

For technical queries:

National Centre for Laboratory and Epidemiology (NCLE)
Telephone: 021 350 209

World Health Organization - Lao PDR
Communications Officer Cathy Williams
Email*: commndiseaseinfo.lao@wpro.who.int
Telephone: 020 514-1105
Office: 021 353902-4 ext 81839

*This is a different email address that was issued in update 2. Please use this email address should you have any queries.

For general medical queries:

UN Dispensary Physician & Nurse

In the first instance please email:
Ivy Caballes ivy.caballes@undp.org
Ben.Burford ben.burford@undp.org

In the second instance please call: 021 267789 or 021 267788 **
**These phone numbers have been corrected from previous updates

For after hours medical emergencies for UN staff **only** please call: 020 559 9292
