

25th May 2009, 6.00 pm

Human infections of influenza A (H1N1):

Perspective from WHO/Lao P.D.R. (update 16)

NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

www.unlao.org/H1N1/influenzah1n1.asp

Highlights:

- Globally, there are **12,515**, confirmed human cases of influenza A (H1N1) with 91 deaths
- WHO is examining its pandemic phases to include social impact and viral severity considerations
- Considerable differences found between novel H1N1 and seasonal flu
- **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. Sustained community level transmission has been documented only in North America.

WHO has stated it will consider reviewing criteria for phases following a proposal by Switzerland, supported by 6 Member States, to give the WHO Director General more flexibility in calling Phase Six and "not straight jacket" itself by looking only at geographical spread. Keiji Fukuda, the WHO's acting assistant Director General, told a news briefing on Friday 22 May that the U.N. agency is now seeking signals that "the risks for people have significantly gone up" before moving the alert from the current Phase 5. The current six-point scale focuses on the way a virus is spreading, not its severity.

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, 25 May 2009, 46 countries have officially reported 12 515 cases of influenza A(H1N1) infection, including 91 deaths.

Mexico has reported 4174 laboratory confirmed human cases of infection, including 80 deaths. The United States has reported 6552 laboratory confirmed human cases, including 9 deaths. Canada has reported 805 laboratory confirmed human cases, including 1 death. Costa Rica has reported 28 laboratory confirmed human cases, including 1 death. No deaths are reported in the other countries.

Western Pacific and Local Region:

There continue to be no deaths in Western Pacific and South East Asian regions. Japan has 345 cases, New Zealand 9 cases, China 15, The Republic of South Korea 3, Australia 16 and Malaysia 2, Chinese Taipei 1, The Philippines 1. Numbers in Thailand are stable at 2.

There are no confirmed human cases of influenza A (H1N1) in the Lao PDR.

What is the WHO Lao PDR country office doing?

WHO continues to provide technical assistance to the Governments response efforts. Ongoing support over the past week has included:

- Strategizing how Lao response activities should change with changes in phase and apparent impact of pandemic influenza on neighbouring countries and in Lao PDR.
- Developing a two day training course for national doctors and nurses on clinical management and infection control which will run this Thursday and Friday
- Providing a consultant to assist NCLE with the new laboratory test kits (RT-PCR primers) for H1N1
- Assisting NEIDCO to organize the final Provincial Pandemic Planning Workshop in the south of Lao PDR taking place from 1-5 June. It will involve the development of tailored provincial plans for the five southern provinces and prioritization of activities to be implemented. Once the workshop is completed, all provinces in Lao PDR will have developed tailored provincial plans.
- Developing Home Treatment Guidelines

The latest WHO Weekly Epidemiological Record finds distinct differences between novel H1N1 and seasonal influenza

Evidence is growing that new influenza A(H1N1) is significantly different from seasonal influenza states the review:

- ❖ new influenza A (H1N1) may be more transmissible than seasonal influenza
- ❖ children and young adults have been disproportionately affected
- ❖ a higher proportion of patients have required hospitalization
- ❖ a substantial proportion of patients with severe illness and deaths have occurred among young and previously healthy adults

Initial WHO guidance on clinical management of patients with new influenza A (H1N1) virus infection can be found on the WHO website:

http://www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/swineflu/clinical_management/en/index.html

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*: commdiseaseinfo.lao@wpro.who.int
Telephone: 020 514-1105
Office: 021 353902-4 ext 81839

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