

9th May 2009, 9.00 am

Dear All,

**Human infections of influenza A (H1N1):**

**Perspective from WHO/Lao P.D.R. (update 8)**

**Highlights:**

- Globally, there are 3261 confirmed human cases of influenza A (H1N1)
- Japan has 1<sup>st</sup> confirmed cases
- National Avian and Human Influenza Coordination Office (NAHICO) is now the National Emerging Infectious Diseases Coordination Office (NEIDCO).
- Possible human-animal transmission update
- WHO welcomes new Communications Officer Cathy Williams  
ph: 021 353902-4 ext 81839, [commdiseaseinfo.lao@wpro.who.int](mailto:commdiseaseinfo.lao@wpro.who.int)
- UN Lao website available: [www.unlao.org](http://www.unlao.org)
- **There are no known suspected or confirmed human cases of influenza**

**What's new in the Western Pacific Region**

- Hong Kong: one confirmed case
- Japan: three confirmed cases
- New Zealand: 5 confirmed case
- South Korea: three confirmed cases

**Global situation**

As of 8 May 2009, 26 countries have officially reported 3,261 cases of influenza A (H1N1) infection.

Mexico has reported 1,204 laboratory confirmed human cases of infection, including 44 deaths. The United States has reported 1639 laboratory confirmed human cases, including two deaths.

The following countries have reported laboratory confirmed cases with no deaths – Austria (1), Brazil (4), Canada (224), China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (1), Colombia (1), Costa Rica (1), Denmark (1), El Salvador (2), France (12), Germany (11), Guatemala (1), Ireland (1), Israel (7), Italy (6), Japan (3), Netherlands (3), New Zealand (5), Poland (1), Portugal (1), Republic of Korea (3), Spain (88), Sweden (1), Switzerland (1) and the United Kingdom (30).

### **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](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/phase/en/index.html)

### **Human-animal transmission of Influenza A (H1N1)**

A herd of pigs in Canada may be the first non-humans to have contracted the novel Influenza A (H1N1) virus. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has confirmed that the pigs on a farm in Alberta, Canada, are infected with an Influenza A (H1N1) virus but further testing is being conducted to determine whether the virus is indeed the novel Influenza A (H1N1) strain, previously referred to in the media as swine flu.

It is hypothesized that the pigs caught the virus from a worker on the farm who had recently returned from Mexico exhibiting flu-like symptoms and tested positive for novel Influenza A (H1N1). The pigs have now recovered from their illness after demonstrating only mild symptoms. It should be noted that when pigs recover from influenza, they are free of the virus and can no longer transmit the disease.

#### *Action being taken*

WHO, UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), World Organisation of Animal Health (OIE), Centre for Disease Control (CDC) and a number of experts have held discussions with Canada on risk management of the herd in Alberta. In addition, OIE and FAO have warned all veterinary authorities and livestock keepers to monitor pig herds for any signs of unusual illness which may be linked to human cases of influenza A (H1N1) influenza. The OIE is currently waiting for the results of tests to determine the susceptibility of livestock to the virus and this information is expected within the next few days. WHO has suggested increased surveillance be conducted to better understand the spread of the virus in swine populations in affected regions.

### **Advice on consumption of pork**

Influenza viruses are not known to be transmissible to people through eating processed pork or other food products derived from pigs. Heat treatments commonly used in cooking meat (e.g. 70°C/160°F core temperature) will readily inactivate any viruses potentially present in raw meat products. Pork and pork products, handled in accordance with good hygienic practices recommended by the WHO, Codex Alimentarius Commission and the OIE, will not be a source of infection. Authorities and consumers should ensure that meat from sick pigs or pigs found dead are not processed or used for human consumption under any circumstances.

For food hygiene practices please see

[http://www.who.int/foodsafety/fs\\_management/No\\_04\\_Codex\\_Jun08\\_en.pdf](http://www.who.int/foodsafety/fs_management/No_04_Codex_Jun08_en.pdf)

### **Advice to travelers**

WHO advises no restriction of regular travel or closure of borders and that people who are ill should delay their travel plans. Returning travelers who are ill or become ill should seek appropriate medical care.

*Travel advice (1 May 2009):*

[http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/guidance/public\\_health/travel\\_advice/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/guidance/public_health/travel_advice/en/index.html)

### **What is the WHO Lao PDR country office doing?**

There are no known suspected or confirmed human cases of influenza A (H1N1) in Lao P.D.R. WHO is providing technical assistance to the Governments response efforts which include the following:

- Briefing for Lao journalists on influenza A (H1N1) held on 7 May to ensure media have a clear understanding of the topic and are fully informed of the domestic and global situation.
- Passenger screening forms developed with the assistance of WHO are being issued at the airport as of 7 May as the Lao Government has decided to conduct passenger screening in the 2 international airports, Vientiane and Luang Prabang and additionally at the Friendship Bridge.
- Development of Lao language case reporting and investigation forms for hospitals and NCLE, which were distributed to six hospitals during trainings on 8 May.
- Development of protocol for triage and handling of ILI cases in Vientiane Capital hospitals in relation to the current phase 5– agreed upon on 8 May.

### **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](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/?s_cid=swineFlu_outbreak_internal_001)

**France:** [http://www.invs.sante.fr/derniere\\_minute/default.asp](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

#### ***For technical queries:***

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

World Health Organization - Lao PDR  
Email\*: [commdiseaseinfo.lao@wpro.who.int](mailto:commdiseaseinfo.lao@wpro.who.int)  
Telephone: 020 514-1105

\*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](mailto:ivy.caballes@undp.org)

Ben.Burford [ben.burford@undp.org](mailto: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

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