

## ECDC EXECUTIVE UPDATE

# Pandemic influenza (H1N1) 2009

Issue 16

Monday, 26 October 2009

## Meetings and events

### *Pandemic influenza preparedness meeting*

ECDC representatives attended a pandemic influenza preparedness meeting on sharing of influenza viruses and access to vaccines and other benefits in Geneva from 19–20 October. This was the latest in the long-running series of influenza virus sharing meetings that followed a unilateral decision in January 2007 by one country (Indonesia) not to share influenza A(H5N1) viruses (bird flu viruses). ECDC issued a [briefing](#) on this at the time of the World Health Assembly in December 2008.

### *ECDC and Advisory Forum teleconference*

On 15 October, ECDC had a prolonged discussion with its Advisory Forum reviewing the format and content of the [ECDC Pandemic Risk Assessment](#). The Risk Assessment is being regularly updated taking into account evidence from Europe and more widely. The next Risk Assessment will be published at the end of this month. The Advisory Forum also agreed to contribute to some revised planning assumptions by ECDC.

## Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview (WISO) highlights

Aggregate numbers of pandemic (H1N1) 2009 cases and deaths in EU and EEA countries are presented in the WISO.

- On 23 October, the cumulative number of reported cases since the beginning of the pandemic in EU/EEA Member States totals 50 277 of which 77 are known to have died.

Discrepancies with the ECDC daily pandemic (H1N1) 2009 update are due to unsynchronised reporting related to the ongoing transition to TESSy. ECDC will continue to monitor the number of fatal cases by country. It must be emphasised that the numbers of fatal cases associated with pandemic influenza are likely to be gross underestimates. Access to healthcare, the quality of the laboratory network in the country, the quality of the surveillance system and the case definition used for identifying fatal cases all affect these figures and will vary from country to country.

### **WISO main highlights**

- Transmission of the pandemic virus is intensifying and becoming more widespread in Europe.
- Nine of the 22 countries reporting described medium to very high intensity activity and 12 of them saw a rising trend.
- Influenza A(H1N1)v virus accounted for 80% of all influenza-positive sentinel and non-sentinel specimens.
- **Technical note:** The influenza season 2009/10 started in week 40/2009. From this WISO issue onwards, week 40/2009 will serve as the point of reference for all cumulative counts except for aggregate influenza A(H1N1)v cases and deaths.

The ECDC Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview is published on Friday afternoons and is available at:

[http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/091023\\_EISN\\_Weekly\\_Influenza\\_Surveillance\\_Overview.pdf](http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/091023_EISN_Weekly_Influenza_Surveillance_Overview.pdf)

## **Weekly digest on pandemic influenza (H1N1) from ECDC Daily Updates**

### **26 October**

#### **Weekly overview of selected non-EU countries**

The [Daily Update](#) on Mondays includes the weekly overview of selected non-EU countries, including Chile, Brazil, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

#### **EMA maintains recommendation of two doses for pandemic vaccine**

On Friday (24 October), the European Medicines Agency's Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use (CHMP) reviewed early data from clinical studies for the three authorised pandemic vaccines, Celvapan, Focetria and Pandemrix. The Committee concluded to maintain the recommendation it adopted in September, namely that the three vaccines be preferably given as two doses, at least three weeks apart. The data currently available for Pandemrix and for Focetria indicate that one dose may be sufficient in adults, but are too limited to allow the Committee to recommend the general use of a single-dose vaccination schedule.

More information is available in the EMA Questions& Answers document:

<http://www.emea.europa.eu/pdfs/human/pandemicinfluenza/66680909en.pdf>

#### **Tamiflu-resistant strain identified in Hong Kong**

An isolated oseltamivir-resistant influenza A(H1N1)v strain was identified in a specimen from a 16-year old girl in Hong Kong. No related cases have been identified. This was the fourth case identified in Hong Kong.

### **21 October**

#### **Media reports influenza A(H1N1) in farmed turkeys**

Media reports of influenza A(H1N1) infections in farmed turkeys in Ontario, Canada, and a farmed pig in Osaka, Japan. Media reports also of influenza A(H3N2) infections among farmed minks in Denmark. According to reports, no human cases have been associated with these outbreaks.

#### **First oseltamivir-resistant strain of A(H1N1) detected in Taiwan**

The first oseltamivir-resistant strain of influenza A(H1N1)v was detected in Taiwan, according to local media reports.

#### **Study of early outbreak of pandemic influenza among US Air Force cadets**

A study describing an early outbreak of pandemic influenza among US Air Force cadets was published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine.

Full article (with subscription) available at: <http://www.ajpm-online.net/>

## 20 October

### **Pandemic influenza (H1N1) updates from USA and Canada**

The Daily Update on Tuesdays includes a weekly update on the pandemic from USA and Canada.

Please see this week's updates at:

[http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/healthtopics/Documents/091020\\_Influenza\\_AH1N1\\_Situation\\_Report\\_0900hrs.pdf](http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/healthtopics/Documents/091020_Influenza_AH1N1_Situation_Report_0900hrs.pdf)

## Scientific Advice

### **Bacterial pulmonary infections in autopsy results from pandemic influenza (H1N1) 2009 deaths in the United States**

Bacterial pulmonary co-infections were found in a substantial proportion of autopsy specimens examined by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) over a four-month period at the beginning of the pandemic in the US.

Respiratory specimens (i.e., lung, trachea and large-airway specimens) collected at autopsy from people who died from pandemic influenza A(H1N1) infection were submitted to CDC by medical examiners, hospitals, and local and state health departments for additional evaluation. A variety of microscopic and molecular methods were used to identify bacteria which found *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, *Streptococcus pyogenes*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Streptococcus mitis*, and *Haemophilus influenzae*; four cases involved multiple pathogens.

Full ECDC review available at:

<http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/activities/sciadvicelists/ECDC%20Reviews/DispForm.aspx?ID=679>

### **Influenza transmission reduction at home when someone is sick by hand-washing and masks – results of a randomised trial in Hong Kong**

A randomised trial of basic hygiene interventions (hand washing and mask wearing) conducted in Hong Kong found that, if instituted soon after the illness started, either hand washing alone or hand washing and mask wearing resulted in partial protection of the household members, significantly reducing the number of secondary infections. In a comment ECDC emphasises the importance of respiratory hygiene in the home.

Full ECDC review available at:

<http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/activities/sciadvicelists/ECDC%20Reviews/DispForm.aspx?ID=668>

## Updates from *Eurosurveillance*

*Eurosurveillance* published this week a special issue on the development of the pandemic H1N1 influenza in the southern hemisphere that includes the following articles:

- [Pandemic H1N1 influenza lessons from the southern hemisphere](#)
- [Preliminary analysis of the pandemic H1N1 influenza on Réunion Island \(Indian Ocean\): surveillance trends \(July to mid-September 2009\)](#)
- [Interim report on pandemic H1N1 influenza virus infections in South Africa, April to October 2009: Epidemiology and factors associated with fatal cases](#)
- [Pandemic influenza in a southern hemisphere setting: the experience in Peru from May to September, 2009](#)
- [Progression and impact of the first winter wave of the 2009 pandemic H1N1 influenza in New South Wales, Australia](#)
- [Pandemic H1N1 influenza surveillance in Victoria, Australia, April – September, 2009](#)
- [Early transmission characteristics of influenza A\(H1N1\)v in Australia: Victorian state, 16 May – 3 June 2009](#)
- [The 2009 pandemic H1N1 influenza and indigenous populations of the Americas and the Pacific](#)

A brief overview of each article can be found in [Friday's Daily Update](#).

## Upcoming events

**26–28 October:** The ECDC-organised European Scientific Conference on Applied Infectious Disease Epidemiology ([ESCAIDE 2009](#)) will be taking place in Stockholm 26–28 October. There will be a particular session on pandemic influenza on the first day.

**27–28 October:** ECDC mathematical modeller, Tommi Asikainen, will participate in a modelling meeting, MIDAS, in Chicago.

**28 October:** The Friends of the Presidency Group on pandemic influenza will meet in Brussels on 28 October. ECDC representatives, in conjunction with the Commission and others, will present the current situation of the pandemic (H1N1) 2009.

**30 October:** ECDC representatives will be participating in '[Influenza at the interface between humans and animals](#)', taking place in Brussels. The conference has been organised by the European Commission (DG Health and Consumers) in conjunction with EU Veterinary week 2009 to promote the concept of 'one health'.