



ECDC assessment on A(H5N1) Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Egypt and possible implications for human health in Europe

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Highly pathogenic avian influenza A(H5N1) infections are continuing to occur in poultry and humans in Egypt, and there is now a concern that the veterinary control measures may be insufficient to keep a check on the continuing outbreaks in poultry, with potential implications for human health in Europe.

However, ECDC concludes in its [rapid risk assessment](#), that there is no evidence of a significant change in the pattern of human illness and deaths related to A(H5N1) virus infections, and there are certainly no epidemiological data or analyses consistent with adaptation of these viruses to humans in Egypt. Although some limited virological analyses carried out may indicate that the risk of an A(H5N1) pandemic emerging could be higher in Egypt than other countries, the implications of these analyses are difficult to interpret.

The first human cases in Egypt occurred in 2006. The risk of pandemic A(H5N1) viruses emerging in Egypt cannot be excluded and the continuing transmission of the virus among domestic poultry and on to humans in Egypt over the past five years is worrying. Egypt's proximity to EU/EEA countries makes this more concerning since a pandemic strain and if it would emerge it would presumably spread to Europe very quickly. Despite the lack of evidence that the risk might be increasing, intensification of veterinary control measures in Egypt should take place because of concerns over both human and animal health.

Constant vigilance should be maintained for any enlargement in human A(H5N1) cluster size, other changes in the behaviour of the virus and for individual human cases outside of countries like Egypt where the virus is recognised as being entrenched in domestic poultry.

Read the rapid risk assessment: [A\(H5N1\) Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Egypt – Implications for human health in Europe](#)

Read more:

[2011-09-01: Potential resurgence of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza](#)
[Avian influenza health topic](#)

