

香港特別行政區政府
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THE GOVERNMENT OF THE HONG KONG
SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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14 January 2004

Dear Healthcare Professionals,

Outbreak of human H5N1 avian influenza in Vietnam

On 13 January 2004, the World Health Organization (WHO) has received laboratory confirmation of three cases of influenza (A/H5N1) avian influenza in humans in Hanoi region of Vietnam http://www.wpro.who.int/public/press_release/press_view.asp?id=326 (WHO website). The samples came from two children and one adult who have since died. The source of infection is being investigated. The WHO has concluded that so far there was no evidence of human-to-human transmission. Concurrently H5N1 avian flu outbreaks among chickens have been reported from Korea and Japan in addition to Vietnam. The Department of Health (DH) is closely monitoring the situation.

Avian influenza (A/H5N1) was first known to infect humans in 1997 when 18 cases (including six deaths) were identified in Hong Kong, and two cases with one death in 2003. The available investigation results conducted in 1997 supported the view that the main mode of transmission was from bird to man, and that man-to-man transmission, although it could occur, was inefficient and rare. For more details, please make reference to the articles on avian influenza (A/H5N1) of the Public Health and Epidemiology Bulletin at <http://www.info.gov.hk/dh/diseases/index.htm>.

Hong Kong has a sensitive and comprehensive influenza surveillance system. The sentinel surveillance shows low flu-like illness (ILI) activity in recent three weeks. There were no A/H5N1 isolates recently from our laboratory surveillance. Influenza activity in Hong Kong has been closely monitored and a weekly summary on influenza activity is available in the DH's website at <http://www.info.gov.dh/diseases/influenza/influenza.htm>.

Yours sincerely,

(Dr Thomas TSANG)
for Director of Health

We are committed to providing quality client-oriented service