

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (70) in DH SEB CD/8/6/1 Pt.27

5 April, 2013

Dear Principal/Person-in-charge,

**Update on Cases of Human Infection with
Avian Influenza A(H7N9)**

Further to our letter to you dated 3 April, 2013, please kindly be informed that seven additional confirmed human cases of avian influenza A(H7N9) were reported by Shanghai Municipality and Zhejiang Province on 3-4 April, 2013. To date, a total of 14 confirmed cases including six deaths from avian influenza A(H7N9) were reported in eastern part of Mainland China.

On 3 April, the National Health and Family Planning Commission (NHFPC) confirmed two cases of avian influenza A(H7N9) in Zhejiang Province, involving two men, aged 38 and 67 respectively. The 38-year-old man has passed away.

On 4 April, another five cases were confirmed in Shanghai Municipality (4 cases, including 2 deaths) and Zhejiang Province (1 death). The four cases in Shanghai Municipality involved a 48-year-old male patient and a 52-year-old female patient who passed away on 3 April; a 67-year-old woman, who is in critical condition and a 4-year-old boy, who is in satisfactory condition. As regard to the case in Zhejiang Province, the 64-year-old male patient passed away on 4 April.

Laboratory tests on these patients' specimens by the Mainland health authorities yielded positive results for H7N9. According to NHFPC, the 48-year-old man was a poultry worker. No epidemiological link between these seven cases was identified. So far, except a close contact of the 52-year-old female patient developed fever and runny nose, no abnormality was detected among the 297 close contacts of these seven cases.



According to the World Health Organization (WHO), at present there is no evidence to show human-to-human transmission among the cases. WHO does not advise special screening at points of entry with regard to this event, nor does it recommend that any travel or trade restrictions be applied.

In Hong Kong, influenza A(H7) is a statutorily notifiable infectious disease. So far, no human cases of influenza A(H7N9) infection were recorded in Hong Kong. The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) is maintaining close liaison with the Mainland health authorities to obtain more information on the cases. At present, Alert Response Level under the Government's Preparedness Plan for Influenza Pandemic of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (2012) is activated and relevant surveillance and control measures have been enhanced.

Influenza A(H7N9) is one type of avian influenza viruses. It is believed that people may become infected through close contact with infected birds and poultry or their droppings. Similar to other avian influenza viruses, H7 virus infection in humans is uncommon. Illness in humans may also include conjunctivitis and/or upper respiratory tract symptoms.

To prevent avian influenza, please kindly advise your children/ staff to **observe strict hand hygiene and avoid touching mouth, nose or eyes**. Wash hands frequently with liquid soap, especially before handling food or eating, after going to toilet, or when hands are dirtied by respiratory secretion after coughing or sneezing. In addition, the following measures are also advised:

- Avoid touching poultry, birds or their droppings, because infected poultry, birds or their droppings may carry the avian influenza virus;
- Wash hands thoroughly with liquid soap and water immediately in case of contact with poultry, birds or their droppings;
- Cover nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing. Dispose sputum or secretions wrapped in tissue paper into rubbish bins with lids. Wash hands with liquid soap and water afterwards;
- Build up good body resistance and have a healthy lifestyle. This can be achieved through a balanced diet, regular exercise, adequate rest, reducing stress and no smoking;
- Poultry and eggs should be thoroughly cooked before eating;
- Maintain good environmental hygiene;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Avoid crowded places with poor ventilation if feeling unwell; and
- Seek medical advice if fever or respiratory symptoms develop.

For children/staff with recent history of travel (especially to affected

areas with avian influenza outbreaks) and have contact with poultry, they should wear a mask and consult doctors promptly if they have flu-like symptoms, and inform the doctor of their exposure history. The affected children/ staff should avoid returning to schools. You may wish to note that CHP has issued guidelines to school on prevention of communicable diseases which can be accessed at (http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/School_full_eng_20110822.pdf).

If you notice any increase in respiratory illnesses or absenteeism among children or staff, please report to our Central Notification Office (Tel: 2477 2772; Fax: 2477 2770) for immediate epidemiological investigations and outbreak control.

More information on avian Influenza is available at CHP website (<http://www.chp.gov.hk>).

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read 'SK CHUANG', is positioned above the printed name.

(Dr. SK CHUANG)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health