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### **APACI Asia-Pacific Media Bulletin**

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## **1. Wet spell pushes up number of influenza-like illness cases**

**The Star (Malaysia), 25 November 2012**

There is a slight increase in influenza-like illness (ILI) cases due to the wet spell. Health Ministry's Disease Control Division director Dr Chong Chee said the number of ILI cases compared to total number of outpatients (national ILI consultation rate) from Oct 7 to Nov 3 showed such cases went up from 0.43% to 0.50%. He said this was still well below the alert threshold of 10%.

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## **2. Scientists decode how flu viruses replicate in cells**

**The Times of India, 23 November 2012**

Scientists have made a major advance in understanding how flu viruses replicate within infected cells, paving way for development of potent vaccines.

Researchers at the Scripps Institute (TSRI) used cutting-edge molecular biology and electron-microscopy techniques to "see" one of influenza's essential protein complexes in unprecedented detail.

"Structural studies in this area had stalled because of the technical obstacles involved, and so this is a welcome advance. The data from this study give us a much clearer picture of the flu virus replication machinery," said Ian A Wilson, the Hansen Professor of Structural Biology at TSRI and senior author of the report.

The report, appeared online in Science Express on November 22, 2012.

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## **3. WHO announces new reporting plan for human H5N1 cases**

**CIDRAP (USA), 21 November 2012**

The World Health Organization (WHO) is changing the way it reports human cases of H5N1 avian influenza, the agency announced today. Cases will be included in a monthly report titled [Influenza at Human-Animal Interface – Monthly Risk Assessment Summary](#).

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## **4. H1N1 back with a bigger sting**

**The Times of India, 20 November 2012**

'Herd immunity' to swine flu, developed over the past couple of years, appears to be diminishing in Karnataka. The department of communicable diseases recorded a 300% spike in the number of deaths due to Influenza A or H1N1 in the state in 2012, compared to 2011. The virus which killed 255 people during 2009-2010, claimed 16 lives in 2011, but in 11 months of 2012, has already claimed 44 lives in Karnataka, including eight in Bangalore.

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## **5. FAO sees signs of decline in H5N1 outbreaks**

**CIDRAP (USA), 19 November 2012**

The number of reported H5N1 avian influenza outbreaks in poultry and wild birds has decreased since mid 2011 and was down sharply in the second quarter of this year, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said in a quarterly update on the ongoing situation.

Six countries reported a total of 98 domestic poultry outbreaks and 5 wild bird cases or outbreaks from April through June of this year, which was far below the 508 outbreaks reported in the second quarter of 2011, the FAO said. The affected countries were Bangladesh, Cambodia, China (including Hong Kong), Egypt, India, and Indonesia.

The report says that nine confirmed human cases of H5N1 illness were reported in the second quarter of 2012 in four countries: Cambodia, China, Egypt, and Indonesia.

So far this year, 30 human H5N1 cases and 19 deaths have been reported, with the most recent case reported in Indonesia in August, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). In 2011 there were 62 cases with 34 deaths.

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## **6. Study Says Air Travel Restrictions Should be a Priority When New Flu Pandemic Begins Overseas**

**Infection Control Today (USA), 19 November 2012**

During the early stages of a new influenza pandemic, travel restriction is an immediate and non-pharmaceutical means of retarding incidence growth. It extends the timeframe of effective mitigation, especially when the characteristics of the emerging virus are unknown. Chong and Chung (2012 Chong KC and Chung Zee BC. Modeling the impact of air, sea, and land travel restrictions supplemented by other interventions on the emergence of a new influenza pandemic virus. [BMC Infectious Diseases 2012, 12:309](#) describe a study in which they used the 2009 influenza A pandemic as a case study to evaluate the impact of regulating air, sea, and land transport. Other government strategies, namely, antivirals and hospitalizations, were also evaluated.

Hong Kong arrivals from 44 countries via air, sea, and land transports were imported into a discrete stochastic Susceptible, Exposed, Infectious and Recovered (SEIR) host-flow model. The model allowed a number of latent and infectious cases to pass the border, which constitutes a source of local disease transmission. The researchers also modeled antiviral and hospitalization prevention strategies to compare the effectiveness of these control measures. Baseline reproduction rate was estimated from routine surveillance data

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## **7. HHS to host international workshop on H5N1 research issues**

**CIDRAP (USA), Monday 19 November 2012**

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) announced today that the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will host a 2-day workshop Dec 17 and 18 to discuss issues related to dual-use H5N1 avian influenza research.

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## **8. Researchers say H5N1 viruses in Egypt may pose special pandemic risk**

**CIDRAP (USA), Monday 19 November 2012**

Most H5N1 avian influenza viruses in Egypt have two mutations that may make them more transmissible in mammals, thus posing a greater threat of sparking a human pandemic than H5N1 viruses elsewhere, according to experts whose research on H5N1 transmissibility sparked a major controversy in the past year. The finding was reported by Ron Fouchier, PhD, Yoshihiro Kawaoka, DVM, PhD, and three other authors in an opinion article published last week in [PLoS Pathogens](#) .

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