

HICMR INFORMATION SHEET: APRIL 2009 SWINE INFLUENZA (Source: WHO, CDC, DHS Vic)

1. What Is Swine Influenza?

- ✓ Swine influenza, or “swine flu”, is a highly contagious acute respiratory disease of pigs, caused by one of several swine influenza A viruses. Morbidity tends to be high and mortality low (1-4%).
- ✓ The virus is spread among pigs by aerosols, direct and indirect contact, and asymptomatic carrier pigs.
- ✓ Outbreaks in pigs occur year round, with an increased incidence in autumn and winter in temperate zones. Many countries routinely vaccinate swine populations against swine influenza.
- ✓ Swine influenza viruses are most commonly of the H1N1 subtype, but other subtypes are also circulating in pigs (eg. H1N2, H3N1, H3N2). Pigs can also be infected with avian influenza viruses and human seasonal influenza viruses as well as swine influenza viruses.
- ✓ Although swine influenza viruses are normally species specific and only infect pigs, they do sometimes cross the species barrier to cause disease in humans.
- ✓ Outbreaks and sporadic human infection with swine influenza have been occasionally reported.

2. Identification of Potential Cases

- Clinical information is currently limited.
- Potential cases include travellers who present with:
 - An influenza-like illness (ILI) (eg. Fever, cough and fatigue)
- Or
- Pneumonia
- And
- Who have travelled to **Mexico or California, Arizona, New Mexico or Texas** in the past two weeks.
- Any suspected cases should be reported immediately by telephone to your State Health Dept.
- Refer to Current State and National Health Department Alerts for further requirements.

World Health Organisation (WHO) / Centers For Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) Update

“Swine flu illness in the United States and Mexico - update 2:

“As of 26 April 2009, the United States Government has reported 20 laboratory confirmed human cases of swine influenza A/H1N1. All 20 cases have had mild Influenza-Like Illness with only one requiring brief hospitalization. No deaths have been reported. All 20 viruses have the same genetic pattern based on preliminary testing. The virus is being described as a new subtype of A/H1N1 not previously detected in swine or humans. Also as of 26 April, the Government of Mexico has reported 18 laboratory confirmed cases of swine influenza A/H1N1. Investigation is continuing to clarify the spread and severity of the disease in Mexico. Suspect clinical cases have been reported in 19 of the country’s 32 states. WHO and the Global Alert and Response Network (GOARN) are sending experts to Mexico to work with health authorities. WHO and its partners are actively investigating reports of suspect cases in other Member States as they occur, and are supporting field epidemiology activities, laboratory diagnosis and clinical management. WHO is not recommending any travel or trade restrictions.” For further information refer: http://www.who.int/csr/don/2009_04_26/en/ and <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/> and <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/chiefofficer/alerts/index.htm>

3. How is Swine Influenza Spread & Diagnosed?

- ❖ Since typical clinical presentation of swine influenza infection in humans resembles seasonal influenza and other acute upper respiratory tract infections, most of the cases have been detected by chance through seasonal influenza surveillance. Mild or asymptomatic cases may have escaped recognition; therefore the true extent of this disease among humans is unknown.
- ❖ People usually get swine influenza from infected pigs, however, some human cases lack contact history with pigs, or environments where pigs have been located.
- ❖ Human-to-human transmission has occurred in some instances but was limited to close contacts and closed groups of people.

4. Prevention of Transmission

- ✚ Currently there are no vaccines that contain the current swine influenza virus causing illness in humans. It is not known whether current human seasonal influenza vaccines can provide any protection. Antiviral sensitivity testing has indicated the virus is sensitive to oseltamivir and zanamivir, but is resistant to amantadine.
- ✚ Policies, procedures and work practices should be routinely implemented to ensure the prompt triage, identification and management of cases of potential Pandemic strain, as outlined in the relevant HICMR Policies:
 - Acute Respiratory Infections, eg. SARS, Avian Influenza (Seasonal or Pandemic)
 - Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response Management
 - Pandemic Influenza Staff Health Management.
- ✚ Patients who are potential Swine Flu cases should be triaged for rapid review, and wear a surgical mask. In addition, suspected cases should be managed in respiratory isolation (Negative Pressure Room), until test results are available.
- ✚ All staff involved in management of the case should implement Appropriate Precautions including P2 (N95) mask, eye protection and gloves, and practice good hand hygiene.
- ✚ The HICMR Internal Audit Tool: *Pandemic Influenza Preparedness & Response*, is currently under review and will be circulated to HICMR clients ASAP.