

Standardization of the influenza A(H7N9) virus terminology

16 April 2013

Please note that the agreed terminology below will be used for all WHO documents from 17 April 2013 onwards.

After broad consultations with experts from FAO, OIE and WHO, a consensus has been reached on the naming of the influenza A(H7N9) virus recently detected in China. The below approach is adopted and will be used in the three organizations' communications.

- The core term is "**avian influenza A(H7N9) virus**", which will be used for scientific / technical or other reports.
- The core term will be used but can be further modified according to specific circumstances. For example:
 - "human infection (or disease) caused by the avian influenza A(H7N9) virus"
 - "chicken infection (or disease) caused by the avian influenza A(H7N9) virus"
 - "swine infection (or disease) caused by the avian influenza A(H7N9) virus" - if detected in swine
- For media communications, especially recognizing that social media such as twitter will gravitate towards use of shortest possible terms, it is suggested that terms such as "H7N9", "H7N9 virus" be used as surrogates as needed.

The above joint standardization efforts from FAO, OIE and WHO are expected to streamline the communication at all levels globally.

The three organizations are committed to joint utmost efforts to respond to challenges including terminology under complicated circumstances, and will review and develop a systematic naming approach to address similar and unpredicted events in the future.