NEWS UPDATE – 15-28 August 2013

Objective 1: increase in seasonal vaccine use

Influenza vaccines to be provided until Sept 30
NNT (Thailand), Monday 26 August 2013
The Public Health Ministry is providing vaccines to people with high risk of catching influenza. Some 3.5 million doses will be available until September 30th, 2013. Public Health Minister Pradit Sintavanarong said 4 groups of people will be offered influenza vaccines. They include elderly people who are over 65 years of age, women who have been pregnant for more than 4 months, children between 6 months to 2 years old, and patients with asthma, diabetes, lung diseases, heart diseases, and renal failure. Furthermore, medical staff and people working in contact with patients or poultry carcasses are also subjected to the injections.

Grippe: bons résultats d’un vaccin Sanofi pour les plus de 65 ans
Aug 26, LeParisien.fr
Sanofi Pasteur, division vaccins du laboratoire pharmaceutique Sanofi, a annoncé lundi qu’une étude du dernier né de la famille des vaccins antigrippaux Fluzone, destiné à la prévention de la grippe chez les plus de 65 ans, avait montré des résultats positifs. Ce vaccin avait obtenu en 2009 le feu vert de l’Agence américaine du médicament (la FDA, Food and Drug Administration) pour bénéficier d’un processus d’autorisation accéléré mais devait encore faire l’objet d’une étude à grande échelle.

Flu vax may halve MI risk
Medical Observer (Australia), 22 August 2013
Influenza experts are calling for reassessment of the national vaccination program following research revealing that the flu injection almost halves the risk of myocardial infarction in middle aged people with ischaemic heart disease. A study from the University of New South Wales found that, in 559 patients aged over 40 and referred to a Sydney hospital over three years, the risk of acute MI decreased by 45% in those patients who had been vaccinated. Lead author Professor Raina MacIntyre, an infectious diseases epidemiologist at UNSW and a director of the Influenza Specialist Group, said that such an extension had previously been considered not to be cost-effective.

Anti-flu vaccination behind schedule
Bangkok Post (Thailand), 21 August 2013
Distribution of the government’s free influenza vaccines is behind schedule, which raises concerns over a possible influenza pandemic, the Department of Disease Control (DDC) says. The DDC was scheduled to give out 2 million doses of free influenza vaccines to high-risk target groups by the end of this month but only about 1.6 million have been given out so far, DDC director-general. Pornthep Siriwanarangsan said Tuesday.

Survey: 46% of adults likely to get flu shot
Aug 15, Info.cvsaremark.com
About 46% of respondents in a US survey said they are more likely to get the flu shot after last year’s late-season rise, according to a survey commissioned by CVS pharmacy and MinuteClinic. However, 59% said they consider it a social responsibility to get vaccinated against flu each year.

Effectiveness of non-adjuvanted monovalent A(H1N1)pdm09 vaccines for preventing RT-PCR-confirmed pandemic influenza hospitalizations
August 15, 2013, Clinical Infectious Diseases
During 2009-2010, scientists examined 217 cases hospitalized with laboratory-confirmed pandemic influenza in nine FluSurv-NET sites and 413 age- and community-matched controls and found a single dose of monovalent non-adjuvanted influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 vaccine was
50% (95% CI=13%–71%) effective in preventing hospitalization associated with A(H1N1)pdm09 virus infection.

**Fewer pupils off school with flu**

*Otago Daily Times (New Zealand), 14 August 2013*

While Dunedin schools have noted a decline in the number of pupils absent with influenza this year, a senior doctor is warning families not to be complacent. This year, the vaccination reached 29% of the population, helping at an individual level by preventing severe complications, rather than greatly reducing the overall rate. Virologist Lance Jennings said higher rates of vaccination meant more people were immune, making it harder for the influenza virus to take hold.

**The American Journal of Bioethics**

*Aug 16, Volume 13, Issue 9, 2013*

- **An Ethical Analysis of Mandatory Influenza Vaccination of Health Care Personnel: Implementing Fairly and Balancing Benefits and Burdens**
  pages 30-37
- **The Case for Mandatory Flu Vaccination of Children**
  pages 38-40
- **Exemptions From Influenza Vaccinations for Health Care Personnel Based on Self or Identity Issues: Are They Justified?**
  pages 44-46
- **Mandatory Influenza Vaccination: How Far to Go and Whom to Target Without Evidence?**
  pages 48-50
- **Professional Solidarity: The Case of Influenza Immunization**
  pages 51-52

**Vaccine**

*Sep 13, Volume 31, Issue 40, Pages 4261-4464*

- **International collaboration to assess the risk of Guillain Barré Syndrome following Influenza A (H1N1) 2009 monovalent vaccines**
  Pages 4448-4458

This study demonstrates that international collaboration to evaluate serious outcomes using a common protocol is feasible. The significance and consistency of the study’s findings support a conclusion of an association between 2009 H1N1 vaccination and GBS. Given the rarity of the event the relative incidence found does not provide evidence in contradiction to international recommendations for the continued use of influenza vaccines.

**The Lancet Infectious Diseases**

*Sep 2013, Volume 13, Number 9, p725 - 822*

- **Risk of Guillain-Barré syndrome after seasonal influenza vaccination and influenza health-care encounters: a self-controlled study**

The study concludes that relative and attributable risks of Guillain-Barré syndrome after seasonal influenza vaccination are lower than those after influenza illness. Patients considering immunisation should be fully informed of the risks of Guillain-Barré syndrome from both influenza vaccines and influenza illness.

**Objective 2: increase in vaccine production capacity**

**FDA approves GlaxoSmithKline's second four-strain flu vaccine**

*Aug 19, CIDRAP*

GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) has won US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval of its second four-strain influenza vaccine, FluLaval Quadrivalent, making it the fourth such vaccine on the US market. Other quadrivalent flu vaccines on the US market are made by MedImmune and Sanofi Pasteur.
Initial work on vaccine for H7N9 bird flu strain completed: official
NZ Week (New Zealand), 16 August 2013
Preliminary work on the manufacturing of a H7N9 vaccine has finished as scheduled, according to Zou Yong, quality director of the Beijing-based Sinovac Biotech Ltd, which is in charge of H7N9 vaccine development. Three batches of vaccine fluid have been prepared and are ready for rationing and vaccine formulation. This will be followed by safety appraisals, stability studies and clinical trials, said Zou.

Objective 3: research and development
N/A

Outbreak news

Scientists cite parallels, differences in emergence of H7N9 and H5N1
Aug 20, The Lancet
In a lengthy perspective article in Lancet Infectious Diseases, Chinese scientists find many parallels between the human outbreak of H7N9 avian influenza in China this year and H5N1 avian flu as it emerged in Hong Kong in 1997, but also some major differences.

New swine flu virus found by University of Hong Kong researchers
South China Morning Post (Hong Kong), 16 August 2013
University of Hong Kong microbiologists have discovered a new strain of influenza virus in dead pigs at a slaughterhouse in Sheung Shui. The team has named the virus porcine parainfluenza virus 1 (PPIV-1). The swine virus is not expected to pose a significant health risk to humans as long as the pork they eat is well cooked. But a top researcher behind the study, microbiologist Yuen Kwok-yung, warned it might mutate and jump from pigs to humans.

Study finds overlap of H7N9, H5N1 hot spots
Aug 15, CDC, Emerging Infectious Diseases
An area of China that borders Anhui and Zhejiang provinces, both in the eastern part of the country, appears to carry a high-risk for human infections with H7N9 and H5N1 viruses, researchers reported yesterday in a letter to Emerging Infectious Diseases.

H1N1

Swine flu patients show symptoms similar to 2009 cases, find experts
The Times of India, 13 August 2013
Patients diagnosed with swine flu now are presenting symptoms similar to those exposed to the virus in 2009, medical experts have said. Immunity developed either through exposure to the virus or vaccination has gone down considerably and hence people are showing symptoms similar to those infected in 2009 when the virus had first struck and entered the pandemic phase across the world, they added.

H5N1

Bird flu suspected in two deaths, no test conducted
The Himalayan Times (Nepal), 26 August 2013
Bird flu has been suspected in the deaths of two women, who suffered from common cold and fever, at the Teaching Hospital of College of Medical Sciences in Bharatpur. The hospital has written a letter to the District Public Health Office (DPHO) after the twin deaths on Saturday, suspecting that the victims were infected with the avian influenza virus (H5N1). However, no sample was collected from the deceased for further laboratory test.
**Cambodian boy dies of H5N1**  
*Aug 15, Globaltimes.cn*  
A 9-year-old boy in Cambodia died of H5N1 avian influenza yesterday, the Chinese news agency Xinhua reported today.

**Nepal's Kathmandu district declared H5N1 emergency zone**  
*Aug 15, CIDRAP*  
The government of Nepal, site of numerous outbreaks of H5N1 avian flu recently, has declared the Bhaktapur district of the Kathmandu Valley as an emergency zone, a story from Bernama, the national news agency of Malaysia, reported today.

**H7N9**

**H7N9 flu spreads faster than others**  
*South China Morning Post (Hong Kong), 20 August 2013*  
The deadly H7N9 influenza spreads at unprecedented speeds, Hong Kong microbiologists say, faster than all known strains of the bird flu virus.

**H7N9 bird flu may be spread through human faeces, research suggests**  
*South China Morning Post (Hong Kong), 15 August 2013*  
The H7N9 bird flu that emerged on the mainland in March may be spreading through human faeces, as university researchers found the virus in the stools of four out of six people killed by the bug in Zhejiang.