**NEWS UPDATE – 12 – 21 November 2013**

**Objective 1: increase in seasonal vaccine use**

**Evaluating the safety of influenza vaccine using a claims-based health system**  
5 December 2013 /Vaccine, Volume 31, Issue 50, Pages 5975-5982  
Natalie L. McCarthy et al

As part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s monitoring and evaluation activities for influenza vaccines, the study examined relationships between influenza vaccination and selected outcomes in the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 influenza seasons in a claims-based data environment. After claims history review, the study ultimately found no increased outcome risk following administration of 998,881 TIV and 538,257 H1N1 vaccine doses in the 2009-2010 season, and 1,158,932 TIV doses in the 2010-2011 season.

**Cochrane re-arranged: Support for policies to vaccinate elderly people against influenza**  
5 December 2013 /Vaccine, Volume 31, Issue 50, Pages 6030-6033  
Walter E.P. Beyer, et al

The 2010 Cochrane review on efficacy, effectiveness and safety of influenza vaccination in the elderly by Jefferson et al. covering dozens of clinical studies over a period of four decades, confirmed vaccine safety, but found no convincing evidence for vaccine effectiveness (VE) against disease thus challenging the ongoing efforts to vaccinate the elderly. However, the Cochrane review analyzed and presented the data in a way that may itself have hampered the desired separation of real vaccine benefits from inevitable ‘background noise’. In this way, general vaccine effects could not be separated from an abundance of environmental and operational, non vaccine-related variation. We re-arranged the very same data according to a biological and conceptual framework based on the basic sequence of events throughout the ‘patient journey’ (exposure, infection, clinical outcome, observation) and using broad outcome definitions and simple frequency distributions of VE values. This approach produced meaningful predictions for VE against influenza-related fatal and non-fatal complications (average ~30% with large dispersion), typical influenza-like illness (~40%), disease with confirmed virus infection (~50%), and biological vaccine efficacy against infection (~60%), under conditions of virus circulation. We could also demonstrate a VE average around zero in the absence of virus circulation, and decreasing VE values with decreasing virus circulation and increasing antigenic drift. We regard these findings as substantial evidence for the ability of influenza vaccine to reduce the risk of influenza infection and influenza-related disease and death in the elderly.

**Ya no hay vacunas contra la H1N1 en Honduras**  
20 Nov 2013 /Laprensa.hn

Aunque la jornada de vacunación contra la influenza se extendió una semana, los centros de salud de la Región Metropolitana de San Pedro Sula ya no cuentan con la vacuna.

**2011-12 flu vaccine effectiveness low, especially in repeat vaccines**  
13 Noviembre/ Oxfordjournals.org

The flu vaccine was 47% effective against medically attended flu for all influenza strains in the 2011-12 season, and being vaccinated the year before lowered effectiveness, according to a study yesterday in *Clinical Infectious Diseases*. 
Should influenza vaccination be mandatory for healthcare workers?
16 November / British Medical Journal, Vol 347, Issue 7933
Amy Behrman, medical director, occupational medicine, Will Offley, casualty nurse

Amy Behrman believes that mandatory vaccination is needed to protect vulnerable patients, but Will Offley argues that evidence on effectiveness is not sufficient to over-ride healthcare workers’ right to choose.

Objective 2: increase in vaccine production capacity

China human vaccine industry report, 2012-2015
Tue, 19 Nov 2013 / Prweb.com

In the wake of China’s economic growth and enhanced disease prevention awareness, Chinese human vaccine market has been expanding. In 2012, Chinese human vaccine market valued RMB10.5 billion with the lot release quantity of roughly 773 million person-portions. In recent years, China has made some achievements in overseas vaccine markets. In 2011-2012, China’s annual human vaccine export volume remained over 9,000 tons (9,840 tons in 2010 was subject to the accidental H1N1 flu event), far more than 8,110 tons in 2009. Moreover, many domestic vaccine companies are still planning overseas markets aggressively.

Objective 3: research and development

Experimental bird flu vaccines show promise in early trials
14 Nov 2013 / Reuters

The first human tests of experimental vaccines against a deadly strain of avian flu, using novel technology that could produce millions of doses very quickly, has produced protective antibodies in the vast majority of recipients. Encouraging results in early-stage trials were announced for separate vaccines from Swiss drugmaker Novartis and Novavax, a biotech company based in Rockville, Maryland. Details of the Novavax vaccine were published online in the New England Journal of Medicine late on Wednesday, while Novartis disclosed its positive findings on Thursday.


Outbreak news

Study: China's complex flu season patterns pose challenges
Wed, 20 Nov 2013 / CIDRAP

According to an analysis of 7 years of flu activity, flu in northern provinces peaks in January and February, as in other Northern Hemisphere locations, while flu in the southern provinces peaks in the spring. The timing is important for flu vaccination planning, because a key strategy is to immunize people a few weeks before local flu activity ramps up to maximize the temporary protection afforded by flu shots.

The study group included researchers from the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC) and Cecile Viboud, PhD, with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Fogarty International Center in Bethesda, Md. Their findings appear today in PLoS Medicine.


New Zealand's flu season was among mildest in 20 years
18 Nov 2013 / Esr.cri.nz

New Zealand’s 2013 influenza season was one of the mildest in 20 years, with hospitalization rates well below last year’s, the New Zealand government's Institute of Environmental Science and Research Ltd. (ESR) reported today.
US flu activity slowly gains ground
15 Nov 2013 / CDC
Flu activity gained a bit more momentum last week but is still low overall, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said today in its weekly update. The percentage of respiratory specimens testing positive for flu rose again, to 5.4%, and for the first time one of CDC's regions—the one including south-central states such as Louisiana and Arkansas—saw clinic visits for flu-like illness rise above its specific baseline.

H1N1

Academics and competing interests in H1N1 influenza media reporting
13 Nov 2013 / J Epidemiol Community Health doi:10.1136/jech-2013-203128
Kate L. Mandeville, et al
UK academics with conflicts of interest, such as ties to drug companies, were about six times more likely to categorize 2009 H1N1 pandemic flu (pH1N1) as a higher risk than official predictions stated, compared with academic who had no such conflicts, a study yesterday in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health found.

H5N1

Indonesian woman dies of H5N1 avian flu
18 Nov 2013 / Channelnewsasia.com
A 31-year-old Indonesian woman from near Jakarta has died of H5N1 avian flu, the country's health ministry said today, according to Agence France-Presse (AFP). Her case is Indonesia's third this year, all fatal.

2 more H5N1 cases in Cambodia, 1 fatal
14 Nov 2013 / Cdcmoh.gov.kh
Two new cases of H5N1 avian influenza have been reported in Cambodia, one in a child and one in an adult who has died of the disease, according to a joint release today from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Cambodian health ministry.

85 H5N1 outbreaks in Nepal led to 1.4 million dead poultry
13 Nov 2013 / Oie.int
Outbreaks of H5N1 avian flu in Nepal in recent months have affected 85 farms and backyard flocks, killed 43,691 poultry, and led to the culling of 1,372,309 additional birds, according to a report posted yesterday by the World Organization of Animal Health (OIE).

Bird flu kills 13th person in Cambodia this year
10 November 2013 / Asian Correspondent (Asia)
A 10-year-old Cambodian boy died Saturday, becoming the country's 13th person to die of bird flu this year, officials said. Cambodia's Health Ministry and the World Health Organization said in a joint statement that the boy died from the H5N1 bird flu virus after suffering from fever, cough, a sore throat and breathing difficulty. Cambodia's 13 bird flu fatalities and 24 confirmed cases are the country's highest annual total since the virus surfaced in 2003, and also the highest for any country this year for the H5N1 variant.

H7N9

H7N9 efforts marked by cooperation, quick response, report says
13 Nov 2013 / WPRO
Lessons learned in response to H7N9 avian flu in China this year include the importance of global cooperation, transparent communication, and collaboration between human health and animal health professionals, the World Health Organization's (WHO's) Western Pacific Region Office (WPRO) said in a new report.
A 64-year-old farmer in east China's Zhejiang Province has been confirmed to have contracted H7N9 bird flu, bringing the total number of avian influenza cases in China to four this autumn, local health authorities said on Saturday.

After H7N9, a new mysterious avian flu: H6N1

After several weeks of calm, the A(H7N9) virus has returned to public attention. Four new cases of infection with this avian virus have been reported in China, confirmed by the World Health Organization. These reports remind us that many gaps remain in our understanding of this virus, particularly because a large part of the victims have reported they had never been in contact with chickens.

Study on first H6N1 case shows close ties to avian virus

An epidemiologic analysis today of the first and only known human case of infection with the H6N1 virus—which was first reported by Taiwanese officials in June—showed the isolate closely matched H6N1 viruses in poultry in Taiwan, according to a study today in The Lancet Respiratory Medicine.