

Pandemic Postings

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National

Exercise Cruickshank newsletter #1 MoH, 02/07. The Ministry of Health has posted a newsletter summarising the timetable for Exercise Cruickshank. The newsletter has key dates for DHB and government agency planning meetings.

Exercise Cruickshank coordinating instructions MoH, 18/01/07. The draft coordinating instructions for Exercise Cruickshank were released for consultation in January. The document presents the exercise aims, objectives, themes and design, lists agencies involved, and introduces the exercise scenario.

International situation

Egypt WHO, 06/02/07. WHO has reported a confirmed case of H5N1 avian influenza in Egypt. The case was a 17-year-old female from Fayyoun (Al Fayyum) Governorate (see [map](#)), who became unwell on 25 January and died 2 February. Initial investigations into the source of her exposure indicate the presence of sick and dead poultry at her home in the days prior to the onset of symptoms. [The WHO table of confirmed human H5N1 cases, and hence the surveillance table in this bulletin, has not yet been updated to include this case].

Nigeria WHO, 31/01/07; WHO, 03/02/07. WHO has reported a confirmed case of H5N1 avian influenza in Nigeria, the first such case from this country. The case was a 22-year-old woman from Lagos who died 16 January. The case's mother died on 4 January with similar symptoms, however no samples had been taken from her. Contacts have been followed up and have shown no symptoms after two incubation periods. Samples from three other suspected cases have been negative. Investigations are underway to identify the source of this case's infection: H5N1 has been identified in poultry outbreaks in Nigeria.

Japan OIE, 08/02/07. Two further poultry outbreaks of H5N1 in Japan have been confirmed. The first of these (29 Jan) was in a chicken farm in Okajama Province, and the second (08/02/07) was in Miyazaki province, where two earlier outbreaks were identified. According to [news reports](#), the Japanese government has ordered the disinfection of 4000 farms in affected regions.

Pakistan OIE, 07/02/07. Two poultry outbreaks of H5N1 have been confirmed in Pakistan. The outbreaks are in Punjab and Northwest Frontier provinces, and have involved mixed backyard poultry.

United Kingdom OIE, 03/02/07. An outbreak of highly-pathogenic avian influenza in a turkey farm in Suffolk, England, has been confirmed due to H5N1. The outbreak began on 27 January and caused 2500 deaths, all in one of the 22 turkey sheds on the 159,000-bird farm. [CIDRAP](#) report that authorities have established a 3km restricted zone and a 10km surveillance zone around the farm, and are culling all birds on the farm. A [government press release](#) states that the virus in the Suffolk outbreak is identical to that found in outbreaks in Hungary, suggesting a link with Hungary poultry farms. The [UK Health Protection Agency](#) is testing three workers with avian influenza symptoms from the Suffolk poultry farm.

Turkey OIE, 09/02/07. A poultry outbreak of H5N1 has been confirmed in Batman province, southeast Turkey (see [map](#)). The outbreak involved backyard chickens, turkeys, geese and ducks.

Current global avian influenza activity
 Confirmed human cases of avian influenza A/(H5N1), 30 Jan - 03 Feb 2007,¹ and outbreaks of highly-pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 in poultry, 27 Jan - 09 Feb 2007,² by country. The complete list of human cases and poultry outbreaks to date can be found on the [ARPHS website](#).

	Human ¹		Poultry ²
	cases	deaths	outbreaks
Japan	-	-	2
Nigeria	1	1	-
Pakistan	-	-	2
Russia	-	-	3
Turkey	-	-	1
United Kingdom	-	-	1
TOTAL	1	1	9

Notes:

1 As reported by [World Health Organization](#)

2 As reported by the [World Organisation for Animal Health \(OIE\)](#).

International (contd)

Russia OIE, 09/02/07. Three poultry outbreaks of H5N1 HPAI in Russia have been reported by OIE. All three outbreaks are in the Black Sea (southwest) province of Krasnodarskiy Kray, and involve small farms with native chickens, ducks, geese and turkeys. These are the first poultry outbreaks in Russia since July 2006.

Map of regions with recent poultry outbreaks of H5N1 infection are shown at the following [link](#).

Background

WHO guidelines for investigating human cases of H5N1 avian influenza WHO, 01/07. The WHO has updated its H5N1 case investigation guidelines, replacing the October 2006 version. Changes in this edition include the following: revision of considerations for initiating an investigation (fever >38°C has been added to the criteria for suspect lower respiratory illness); revision of the section on contact tracing, including the timeframes for tracing (contacts are now thought to be at risk if they had close unprotected contact with the case patient from 1 day before to 14 days after the case patient's illness onset); and monitoring of health-care workers (healthcare workers who have provided care for case patients should be monitored for fever and symptoms of influenza-like illness). Technical references have been revised and amended.

H5N1 widespread in Indonesian cats New Scientist, 24/01/07. This news item reports findings by a scientist in Indonesia who collected blood samples from 500 stray cats around market areas in four areas of Java that have had H5N1 outbreaks in poultry. 20% of cats tested carried antibodies to H5N1. Concerns have been raised that the scale of feline infection represents a vastly greater opportunity for the virus to adapt to mammals than has previously been suspected.

Role of combination antiviral therapy in pandemic influenza and stockpiling implications Tsiodras et al, BMJ 2007;334:293-4. The authors of this article argue that the role of the M2 ion channel inhibitor group of antivirals (amantadine and rimantidine) should be reconsidered in pandemic planning. While not recommended as monotherapy agents, the authors suggest that combining ion channel inhibitors with neuraminidase inhibitors may reduce side effects and risk of resistance, and stockpiling of these agents should be considered. [see also [BMJ editorial](#) on pandemic planning, in the same issue]