

Current major event

New human case of avian influenza A (H5N1) in Egypt

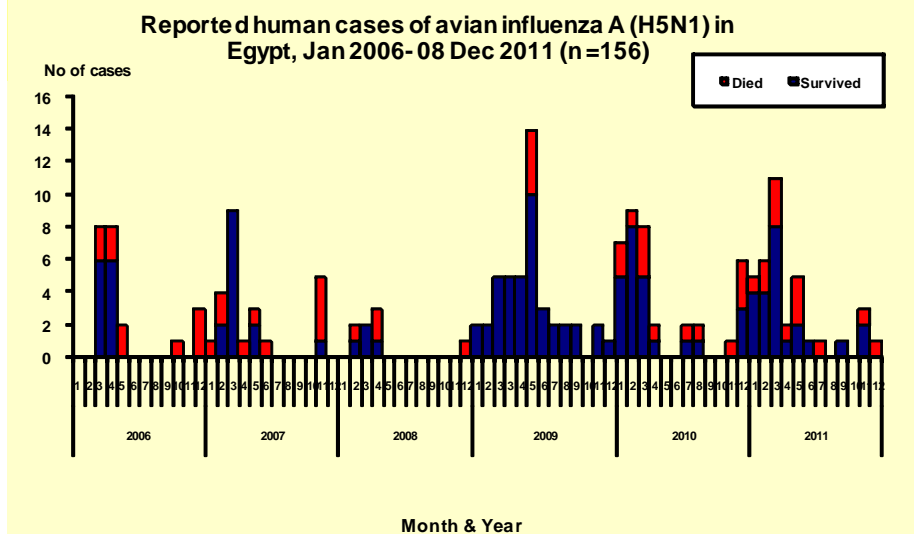
The Ministry of Health and Population in Egypt has reported three new cases of human infection with avian influenza A (H5N1) virus in November and one new case in December 2011. Of these newly reported cases, two were fatal. Thus, the total number of confirmed cases of human infection with avian influenza A (H5N1) reported from Egypt rose to 156 including 54 deaths. All these newly reported cases had exposure to sick chicken in the backyard poultry. However, upon investigation it was also found that at-least three of the newly reported cases were found to have been epidemiologically linked to each other hailing from the same district. Further investigations are ongoing on this cluster of cases found in the same district.

Editorial note

In 2011 (upto 08 December), the Ministry of Health and Population in Egypt reported a total of 36 new cases of human infection with avian influenza A (H5N1) virus including 13 deaths. This is almost 63 percent of the global new cases (57) reported in 2011. Of the 30 new deaths reported globally from the same disease in 2011, Egypt reported 13 deaths (43%). Egypt has, thus in recent time, become an epicenter for highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1) virus activity and one of the few countries where the virus is entrenched.

Reports of influenza A (H5N1) virus infections in humans in Egypt show that most of the infected persons had contact with sick poultry in backyards, as has been reported in Asia. The recent report of a cluster of three cases from the same locality indicate that the public health threat to humans in Egypt is much more widespread than previously reported.

Although, there may be a seasonal pattern of outbreaks for human infections with avian influenza A(H5N1) virus in



Age group	Cases	Deaths	CFR (%)
< 5 yrs	47	2	4.2
5 to 15 yrs	35	4	11.4
>15 to 30 yrs	46	33	71.7
>30 to 45 yrs	23	12	52.1
>45 yrs	5	3	60
Total	156	54	34.6

Egypt (Please see the graph), as cases have largely been reported during the winter seasons. However, since 2009, new cases have also been reported during summer months which may indicate a continuous evolution of subtype H5N1 viruses endemic to Egypt. As influenza activity usually peaks in winter months, the high incidence of cases during winter month might reflect seasonality conforming to the climate, but not necessarily, the high incidence is due to increased virus activity but rather may be due to other unidentified behavioural and environmental factors that need to be investigated in large.

The highly pathogenic influenza (H5N1) virus remains a persistent public health threat in Egypt. It is important to continuously monitor the evolution of subtype H5N1 and other influenza viruses in Egypt. The threat of yet another human pandemic influenza is not yet over as long as the H5N1 virus continues to evolve in Egypt.

Update on outbreaks

in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

Wild polio type 3 in Pakistan; Avian Influenza (H5N1) in Egypt

Current public health events of international concern

[cumulative N° of cases (deaths), CFR %]

Avian influenza

Egypt	[156 (54), 34.6%]
Indonesia	[182 (150), 82.4 %]
Viet Nam	[119(59), 49.6%]
Cambodia	[18(16), 88.9%]
Global total	[574 (337), 58.7%]

ILI (Swine origin triple assortment influenza A (H3N2))

USA	[3(0) , 0%]
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Yellow fever

Senegal	[3(0), 0%]
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Measles

Canada	[802 (0)]
Ukraine	[37 (0)]#
Ecuador	[193(1), 0.51%]

AWD (Cholera)

Haiti	[22366(236), 1 %]*
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CFR=Case-Fatality Rate;

ILI = Influenza-like Illness

* Number of hospital visits;

Suspected cases only