

Current major event

Six new cases of avian influenza A (H5N1) in Egypt

During the last two months (January-February, 2011), the Ministry of Health in Egypt reported a total of six (6) new cases of human infection with avian influenza A (H5N1) virus including one (1) death. This brings the total number of reported cases of human infection with avian influenza A (H5N1) in Egypt to 125. Of these cases confirmed in Egypt to date, 41 have been fatal.

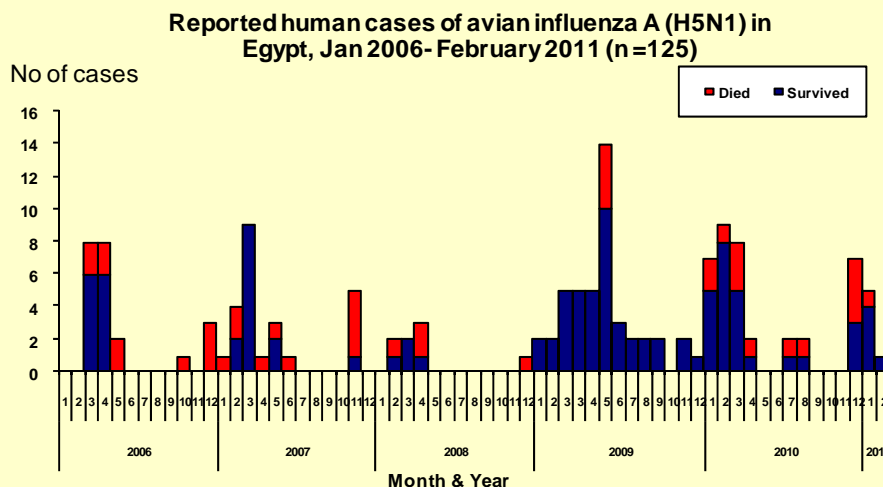
Editorial note

During this current winter season in Egypt, the sudden upsurge in human cases of avian influenza A(H5N1) (reported in *weekly epidemiological monitor*, vol-4; issue-2) continued, with five more new cases reported in January and one new case reported on 22 February 2011. In December 2010, seven new cases of human infection with avian influenza A (H5N1) were reported heralding this sudden increase.

Despite this trend of seasonal surge which has been observed in Egypt for the last three consecutive years-2009 to 2011 (Please see the graph), the age-specific infection and death profiles among confirmed human cases of avian influenza A (H5N1) have not shown any marked difference. Children younger than 15 years continues to comprise of 55 to 60% of all newly reported cases and the death rate in this particular age group still remains far less than compared to above 15 years age group.

Although, the number of cases, reported in 2010, dropped (by about 25%) compared to the previous year, the case fatality ratio increased by about four folds in 2010 compared to last year (44% in 2010 versus 10% in 2009). This year, of the six new cases reported, only one was fatal (CFR:16.6%). However, it is too early to make any comparison between the fatality rate reported this year with the previous two years.

There is no doubt that, without an effective control strategy, the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) virus will



Age distribution of confirmed human cases of Influenza A/ (H5N1) in Egypt

Age group	Cases	Deaths	CFR (%)
< 5 yrs	39	2	5.1
5 to 15 yrs	33	5	15.1
>15 to 30 yrs	35	22	62.8
>30 to 45 yrs	14	9	64.2
>45 yrs	4	3	75
Total	125	41	32.8

continue to spread in Egypt and pose a major threat to public health.

Since the first laboratory-confirmed human case of avian influenza (AI) was reported in Egypt on 20 March 2006, all the 29 Governorates in the country have now reported human cases of avian influenza A (H5N1) meaning that the virus is now fully entrenched in the country. Continued human exposure to and infection with highly pathogenic avian influenza virus H5N1 increases the likelihood that this virus may mutate or reassort in a way that will result in efficient human-to-human transmission.

The AI A(H5N1) virus remains and will continue to pose a potentially serious pandemic threat as long as it does not lose its strength for an efficient human-to-human transmission. Consequently, the basic strategy to minimize the potential for a pandemic strain to emerge will be to control infections in poultry and limit the opportunity for humans to be exposed and become infected with AI virus through effective control measures.

Update on outbreaks

in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

Avian Influenza A(H5N1) in Egypt

Current public health events of international concern

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

Avian influenza

Egypt	[125 (41), 32.8%]
Indonesia	[171 (141), 82.4 %]
Viet Nam	[119(59), 49.6%]
Cambodia	[13(11), 84.6%]
Global total	[525 (310), 59%]

Cholera

Haiti	[185012*(3790), 2 %]
Chad	[2508 (111), 4.4%]
Nigeria	[29115 (1191),4%]

Kala-Azar (Visceral Leishmaniasis)

S. Sudan	[6363(303). 4.7%]
----------	--------------------

Dengue fever

Pakistan	[11024(40), 0.3 %]#
Yemen	[1903(12), 0.6 %]#

Yellow fever

Uganda	[226(53), 23.4 %]
Cote d' Ivoire	[79 (35) , 44.3%]

CFR=Case-Fatality Rate; * Number of hospital visits; # Laboratory-confirmed cases only