



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部食物及衛生局
Food and Health Bureau, Government Secretariat
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

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24 February 2011

Ms Elyssa Wong
Clerk to Panel on Health Services
Legislative Council
8 Jackson Road
Central

Dear Ms Wong,

Follow-up to Panel on Health Services
Meeting of 14 February 2011

Prevention and Control of Influenza

I refer to the Panel meeting held on 14 February 2011, at which the prevention and control of influenza was discussed. Members requested the Administration to provide further information regarding the situation of influenza activity and the uptake of influenza vaccination. Our response is set out as follows –

ICU admissions and death rates of influenza cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) has been monitoring influenza activity through a new case-based surveillance system, in collaboration with the Hospital Authority and private hospitals, for severe influenza cases requiring admission to Intensive Care Units (ICU) during this winter flu season.

For the 24-day period from 24 January to 16 February 2011, the age distribution of ICU cases and fatal cases are set out in Annex 1. For cases of children aged under 6 years, CHP has recorded 5 ICU cases and no death cases.

Uptake rates of the 2010/11 Seasonal Influenza Vaccination

The estimated population of various target group members and the number of vaccine recipients under the Government Vaccination Programme (GVP), the Childhood Influenza Vaccination Subsidy Scheme (CIVSS) and the Elderly Vaccination Subsidy Scheme (EVSS), as at 6 February 2011, are set out in Annex 2.

It is difficult to derive accurate coverage rates on the available data because the population of some target groups is not known. Moreover, many target group members may have received vaccination outside the Government's vaccination schemes.

Comparison of severe influenza cases in Hong Kong with other places

Please refer to Annex 1 for the situation of severe influenza cases in Hong Kong. During the 24-day period from 24 January to 16 February 2011, CHP recorded 82 ICU patients (including 12 deaths) with laboratory confirmed influenza. Among these patients, 5 (6%) were less than 5 years; 6 (7%) were aged between 5 and 14 years; 58 (71%) were aged between 15 and 64 years; and 13 (16%) were older than 64 years. Among the ICU cases (including fatal cases), the median age was 51.5 years and about 65% had chronic medical conditions. Among the fatal cases, the median age was 60.5 years and most (75%) had chronic diseases.

So far, the local epidemiological picture of human swine influenza (HSI) during this flu season is compatible with other countries/regions experiencing flu seasons predominated by HSI. Most cases in Europe, for example, were also predominated by HSI in the current winter flu season.

In the United Kingdom, among the 393 fatal cases with information on age, 13 (3%) were aged less than 5 years; 16 (4%) were aged between 5 and 14 years; 283 (72%) were aged between 15 and 64 years; and 81 (21%) were older than 64 years. About 70% belonged to high risk groups.

In France, since 2011, a total of 534 influenza cases have been reported from ICUs with HSI predominating and around 70% of cases being between 15 and 64 years of age. A clinical risk factor was reported in about 60% of cases.

In Spain, from October 2010 to January 2011, more than a thousand severe hospitalised influenza cases have been reported. Severe cases were mostly in the 15–64 year age groups (67%) and about 80% belonged to high risk groups.

As for Asia, the current flu season in Taiwan is similarly predominated by HSI. There were 38 deaths associated with HSI recorded from January 2011 to 11 February 2011. From 2 January 2011 to 15 February 2011, a total of 820 severe flu cases have been reported, among 8% were aged less than 5 years; 6% from 5 to 14 years; 70% from 15 to 64 years; and 16% older than 64 years.

Yours sincerely,



(Ms Estrella Cheung)
for Secretary for Food and Health

c.c. Director of Health (Attn: Dr Thomas Tsang)

Annex 1**Age distribution of ICU and fatal cases of influenza**

(24 January – 16 February 2011)

Among patients with laboratory confirmation of influenza infection, the age distribution of ICU cases (including fatal cases) by chronic disease status is as follows –

Age group (years)	With known chronic disease	Not known to have chronic disease	Total
0-4	5	0	5
5-14	5	1	6
15-24	6	1	7
25-34	1	5	6
35-44	6	4	10
45-54	5	5	10
55-64	14	11	25
65 or above	10	3	13
Total	52	30	82

The age distribution of fatal cases by chronic disease status is as follows –

Age group (years)	With known chronic disease	Not known to have chronic disease	Total
0-4	0	0	0
5-14	1	0	1
15-24	1	0	1
25-34	0	1	1
35-44	0	0	0
45-54	1	0	1
55-64	5	1	6
65 or above	1	1	2
Total	9	3	12

Annex 2**Uptake of the 2010/11 Seasonal Influenza Vaccination**

(as of 6 February 2011)

The estimated population of various target group members and the number of vaccine recipients under the Government Vaccination Programme (GVP), the Childhood Influenza Vaccination Subsidy Scheme (CIVSS) and the Elderly Vaccination Subsidy Scheme (EVSS) are set out as follows –

Target groups	Vaccination programme	Eligible persons [#]	Estimated population	No. of recipients [^] (no. of doses if different)
Elderly aged 65 or above	GVP	Elders aged 65 or above who have chronic illness and being followed up in public clinics or who are receiving CSSA, as well as elderly persons living in residential care homes	916 600	161 807
	EVSS	Elderly aged 65 or above		104 340
Persons with chronic illness	GVP	Persons under 65 years with chronic illness receiving CSSA, some long-stay HA in-patients who have chronic illness, and long-stay residents of institutions for the disabled	N/A	18 106
Pregnant women	GVP	Pregnant women receiving CSSA	N/A	16
Healthcare workers	GVP	Healthcare workers in public sector and residential care homes or institutions for the disabled	94 500	22 715
Children between the age of 6 months and less than 6 years	GVP	Children between the age of 6 months and less than 6 years from families receiving CSSA	428 000	3 617 (4 182)*
	CIVSS	Children between the age of 6 months and less than 6 years		42 629 (47 463)*
Poultry workers	GVP	Poultry workers or staff who may be involved in poultry culling operations	N/A	3 955
Pig farmers and pig-slaughtering industry personnel	GVP	Pig farmers and pig-slaughtering industry personnel	1 550	226
Total:				357 411 (362 810)*

Estimated population only and the population of some target groups is not known.

[^] Many target group members may have received vaccination outside the Government's vaccination schemes.

* Some children who had no seasonal influenza vaccination before received two doses.