

Auckland Regional Public Health Service

Rātonga Hauora ā Iwi o Tamaki Makaurau



Working with the people of Auckland, Counties Manukau and Waitemata

Current Alert Level: WHITE (see [NHEP:ID](#) for definition)
Update number: 4
Date: 28 November 2005
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National

Tamiflu supply debate. Much publicity has been given during the week to issues surrounding availability of antivirals and possible distribution strategies for the national antiviral stockpile.

- **Roche suspends public sales of Tamiflu.** [25/11/05, Roche.](#) Roche have announced that it will prioritise Tamiflu supply to influenza-treatment requirements created by the Northern Hemisphere winter flu season and to fulfilment of government pandemic orders, and as a result Tamiflu will not be available in New Zealand community pharmacies until May 2006. Similar announcements have been made in the United States, Canada and China. The Ministry of Health ([25/11/05, MoH](#)) have commented that the Roche announcement will not affect the national stockpile.
- **Final decisions on Tamiflu use will not be made until exact nature of pandemic influenza confirmed.** [23/11/05, MoH.](#) Following National spokesperson Tony Ryall's release of a draft discussion document on distribution of the national Tamiflu stockpile, the Ministry of Health has stated that no policy decisions have yet been made on this issue; however, the majority of treatment courses are likely to be used for treatment of unwell people. Strategies to use Tamiflu to 'ringfence' an outbreak, and to treat people working in essential services, are also being considered.

International

US FDA: Paediatric deaths in Japan unrelated to Tamiflu [18/11/05, FDA.](#) The US Food and Drug Administration's Paediatric Advisory Committee has reviewed reports of 12 deaths among children taking Tamiflu in Japan, and has concluded that there is no causal relationship between Tamiflu and the reported pediatric deaths. Instead, the FDA has said that the children's deaths appear to be part of a wave of influenza-related encephalitis and encephalopathy cases among Japanese children that began in the mid-1990s, prior to introduction of oseltamivir. FDA Q&A sheet [here](#).

Vaccinating poultry against avian influenza is contributing to spread. [26/11/05, BMJ.](#) The WHO has warned that inappropriate use of vaccination in poultry to try to prevent the spread of bird flu has become part of the problem, because vaccination can cause silent transmission of infection from asymptomatic birds, and disease could be spread by people tramping from farm to farm implementing mass vaccination programmes. The Chinese government has announced plans to vaccinate all its 4 billion chickens, and the Indonesian government has stated it does not have the resources to control the outbreak by culling because it cannot afford to compensate farmers.

[Links](#) to key pandemic planning sites NZ/worldwide

Background information about pandemic/avian influenza:

[Ten things you need to know about pandemic influenza \(WHO\)](#)

[Avian influenza \(US National Wildlife Center\)](#)

[New England Journal of Medicine review paper](#)

Contact phone numbers

Ministry of Health advice line: 0800 AVN FLU (286 358)

MAF Hotline (for suspect animal cases): 0800 809 966

Pandemic Postings

Global spread of avian influenza to date

Confirmed human cases of avian influenza A/(H5N1), to 25 November 2005,¹ and animal outbreaks of highly-pathogenic avian influenza A/H5,² to 25 November 2005

	Human ¹		Animal ²
	cases	deaths	outbreaks
Cambodia	4	4	15
China	3	2	68
Croatia	-	-	2
Hong Kong	-	-	4
Indonesia	11	7	216
Japan	-	-	10
Kazakhstan	-	-	1
Korea (South)	-	-	19
Laos	-	-	1
Malaysia	-	-	10
Mongolia	-	-	2
Romania	-	-	5
Russia	-	-	51
Thailand	21	13	1161
Turkey	-	-	1
Vietnam	93	42	1838
TOTAL	130	67	3404

Notes:

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

2 As reported to [World Organisation for Animal Health \(OIE\)](#)

Background

* **Belshe RB: The origins of pandemic influenza.** [New Engl J Med 2005;353:2209-11.](#) This perspectives paper summarises the main implications from recent papers in [Science](#) and [Nature](#) characterising the reconstructed 1918 pandemic influenza virus. The paper in [Nature](#) provides some guidance on the genetic changes to H5N1 necessary for highly efficient spread: Identification of these sequences provides a basis for monitoring any evolution of H5N1 toward a virus capable of pandemic spread. Currently, H5N1 isolated from humans in Vietnam contains one of the five amino acid changes to the polymerase gene PB2 identified as important to the ability of the 1918 virus to infect humans.

Barnett DJ et al: A Systematic Analytic Approach to Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Planning. [PLoS 2005;2\(12\):e359.](#) Paper providing examples of pandemic planning using the Haddon matrix, an analytic tool that can be used for examining a scenario in terms of antecedent factors (host, agent/vector, physical environment and sociocultural environment) and phases (pre-event, event and post-event).

Chan MCW et al: Proinflammatory cytokine responses induced by influenza A(H5N1) viruses. [Resp Res 2005;6:135.](#)

Hyperinduction of cytokines (producing a so-called "cytokine storm") may be relevant to the pathogenesis of H5N1 disease.

Emerging Infectious Diseases January issue to focus on influenza. [Emerg Infect Dis 2006; 12\(1\).](#) Some articles available online ahead of print; other articles to be included in this issue will address topics such as nonpharmaceutical control measures, influenza pathogenesis, history of pandemics, vaccinology and antivirals.

Bibliography of selected papers on pandemic/avian influenza available on the [CIDRAP](#) (University of Minnesota) website.