



DIRECTORATE
OF HEALTH

Chief Epidemiologist for Iceland

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THE NOVEL INFLUENZA A(H1N1) (SWINE INFLUENZA)

The national Committee on Communicable Diseases held a meeting on 22 April 2009 discussing, among other things, information from the United States that swine influenza had been diagnosed in two children in Southern California and Texas in the beginning of April. The children were not epidemiologically linked but one of the children had probably been infected from his/her mother. It was of interest that these children had no connection with pigs. It was also noted the swine influenza had been known for 50 years, giving similar symptoms as seasonal influenza but human-to-human transmission was rare.

Early in the morning of 24 April, an Icelandic mother to a young woman studying in Mexico City contacted the Chief Epidemiologist asking why all schools in the Mexican capital were closing because of an unidentified serious epidemic. No information was available at that time on international outbreak warning systems but an hour later all warning systems informed that swine influenza was being detected in California and Texas with mild symptoms and a serious outbreak of influenza with high case fatality ratio had been detected in Mexico.

First response

The Chief Epidemiologist and the Civil Protection Department of the National Commissioner of the Icelandic Police invited to a press conference on 28 April where they announced that the Icelandic pandemic preparedness plan had been activated in accordance with the risk level. Also, information on the novel virus A (H1N1), originally called swine influenza, as well as advice to the general public was



A health care centre was opened on 29 April 2009 in the arrival hall at Keflavik International Airport offering medical examination to passengers with possible symptoms of influenza-like illness.

given on the web sites of the institutions concerned (www.landlaeknir.is, www.influenza.is and www.almannavarnir.is).

The original response was to monitor travellers arriving in Iceland from the US and

Health Alert Notice for International Travelers Arriving in Iceland Concerning Influenza A (H1N1) (Swine Influenza)

Alert for Travelers
If you have visited Mexico or USA you should monitor your health after leaving these countries since you may have been exposed to influenza A(H1N1) (swine influenza). If you become ill with fever accompanied by cough or difficulty in breathing within 7 days after leaving these countries you should contact the nearest community health care centre.

For your attention, there is a Health Care Centre in the arrival hall at Keflavik Airport where patients with the above-mentioned influenza-like symptoms are taken care of.

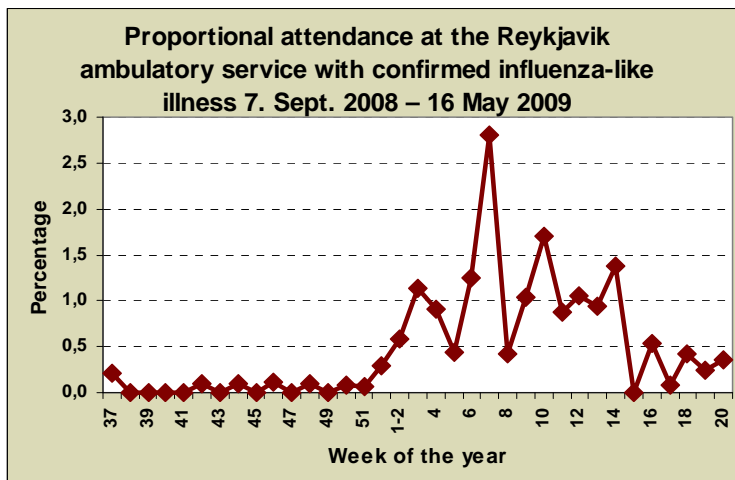
If you do not have these symptoms you are not considered infectious to others. Please save this announcement.
Further information can be obtained at the WHO website: www.who.int/en/ and the ECDC website: <http://ecdc.europa.eu/>


LANDLÆKNISEMBETTID
Chief Epidemiologist for Iceland

7 May 2009

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On 20 May 2009, 10.215 confirmed cases of influenza A(H1N1 had been reported in 42 countries.



vaccines will arrive before a serious epidemic comes to the country.

Current position

On 15 May, the travel advice to avoid unnecessary travel to Mexico was lifted. This action was taken in collaboration with authorities in other Nordic countries. The health care centre in the arrival hall at Keflavik

International Airport was closed but arriving passengers were given the opportunity to call an emergency number in case of need. The preparedness level has been unchanged since it was set.

The assessment of the Chief Epidemiologist is that the novel influenza A(H1N1) currently spreading around the globe could be the first wave of a pandemic. It is to be expected

that the pandemic will slow down during the summertime in the northern hemisphere but in the fall, a second wave of the pandemic may emerge with unclear consequences. Therefore, the Department of Civil Protection and the Chief Epidemiologist must continue their work on the preparedness plan in order to improve it and learn from the experience already gained.

Haraldur Briem

DIAGNOSES AT THE LUH DEPARTMENT OF VIROLOGY IN APRIL 2009

On 15 May, the travel advice to avoid unnecessary travel to Mexico was lifted.

I. Respiratory infections

In April, influenza was diagnosed in more than half of all positive samples at the Virology Department of the University Hospital of Iceland. The majority of these were influenza B cases but a few patients were diagnosed with influenza A(H3). No one was diagnosed with the new influenza A(H1N1)

Other viruses diagnosed were: parainfluenza, RSV, rhinoviruses and enteroviruses.

II. Gastrointestinal infections

Viruses diagnosed in faecal samples were: rotavirus, astrovirus and norovirus.

III. Influenza diagnoses

During the period 27 April to 13 May, 19 patients were diagnosed with influenza. Thirteen of those had influenza B, two had influenza A(H3) and four had other types of influenza A. No one was diagnosed with the new influenza A(H1N1) (swine influenza) .

There is still some seasonal influenza activity in Iceland, which is in accordance the number of patients diagnosed with influenza-like illness at the Reykjavik ambulatory service (fig. above).

Thorolfur Gudnason