

# Are we prepared for the next pandemic?

Every year the "Flu" or Influenza kills approximately 1.000.000 people around the world. Influenza is a viral disease that occurs more frequently in children in their first two years of life and adults older than sixty years of age.

There are three types of influenza virus: A, B, and C.

The strains of human influenza are types A and B which are responsible for major outbreaks each year.

In the last century three pandemics occurred. The most devastating was the Spanish Flu of 1918-1919 (A/H1N1 virus) with an estimated 50 million deaths world wide. The other two pandemics occurred in 1957-1958 (Asian Flu) and 1968-1969 (Hong Kong Flu), each one responsible for an estimated mortality of 4 million people.

There are approximately 144 strains of Avian Influenza or "Bird Flu" or Poultry Flu, many circulate in wild birds at low levels, and occur frequently in water birds. Most of these viruses within the wild bird population are benign.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) viruses can cause great mortality in domestic poultry flocks but are very rare in wild birds.

According to BirdLife International, there is no evidence that HPAI infection in humans has ever been acquired from wild birds. Human infections have occurred in people who have been closely associated with poultry. However, there is a possibility that this virus could mutate into one that might be transmitted from human to human. If this happens it could spread rapidly around the world.

Although the next influenza pandemic is impossible to predict, it has been almost 37 years since the last pandemic. The longest recorded inter-pandemic interval is 39 years. All that is necessary for a pandemic to occur is for the HPAI virus to adapt to sustain person to person transmission. According to the latest virological and surveillance findings there are signs that a pandemic may be imminent.

The population of Latin America and the Caribbean is estimated for 2005 to be around 560 million people, or approximately 9% of the world's population; 77% of this population is urban.

Influenza pandemics have historically taken the world by surprise, leaving minimal time for health services to prepare for abrupt increases in cases and deaths that characterize these events and make them so disruptive. Given these potential limitations, strengthening health care services will be vital during pandemic preparedness as even health care systems which function efficiently under ordinary circumstances are not likely to have sufficient surge capacity in the event of a pandemic.

In general, public health authorities in the region recognize the risk of an influenza pandemic and its potential impact on the population. But the development of a Pandemic Preparedness Plan is not always a priority. It competes with many other current public health issues and lack of human resources needed to dedicate time and effort to a potential threat.

World Health Organization

**Avian Influenza**

[http://www.who.int/topics/avian\\_influenza/en/](http://www.who.int/topics/avian_influenza/en/)

**Epidemic and Pandemic Alert and Response (EPR)**

[http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian\\_influenza/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/index.html)

**Avian Influenza and Food Safety Issues**

<http://www.who.int/foodsafety/micro/avian/en>

US Department of Health and Human Services

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**Avian Flu Site**

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/>

European Union

**Animal Health and Welfare/EU Action on Avian**

**Influenza**

[http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/food/animal/diseases/controlmeasures/avian/index\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/food/animal/diseases/controlmeasures/avian/index_en.htm)

UN Food and Agriculture Organization

**Agriculture Department-Animal Production and Health Division**

**Animal Health/Avian Influenza**

[http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/subjects/en/health/diseases-cards/special\\_avian.html](http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/subjects/en/health/diseases-cards/special_avian.html)

BirdLife International

**BirdLife International: Statement on Bird 'flu'**

[http://www.birdlife.org/action/science/species/avian\\_flu/index.html](http://www.birdlife.org/action/science/species/avian_flu/index.html)

National Audubon

Bird and Science

Avian Flu Information

<http://www.audubon.org/bird/AvianBirdFlu.php>

# Nos ta prepara pa e proximo pandemia?

Tur aña e "griep" of influenza ta mata aproximadamente un miyon di hende rond mundo. Influenza ta un malesa viral cu ta ataca muchanan di entre zero pa dos aña y adultonan di riba 60 aña di edad mas frecuentemente.

Tin tres tipo di virus di influenza: A, B y C. E variedadnan di influenza di hende ta tipo A y B, cu ta esnan responsabel pa e temporada di griep di tur aña.

Den e ultimo siglo tawata tin tres pandemia. E mas devastador tawata e influenza spaño di 1918-1919 (un virus categoria H1N1) cu a mata alrededor di 50 miyon hende rond mundo. E otro dos pandemia tawata na 1957-1958 (Griep Asiatico) y 1967-1969 (Griep di Hong Kong), cada uno responsabel pa alrededor di 4 miyon of mas di hende cu a muri.

Tin aproximadamente 144 variedad diferente di influenza aviario of griep di parha of griep di galinja, hopi ta circula entre parhanan silvestre den nivelnan hopi abao y frecuentemente ta afecta e parhanan acuario. Hopi di e virusnan aki den e parhanan silvestre ta benigno.

Virusnan di Influenza Aviario Altamente Patogénico (HPAI) por causa mortandad halto den grupo di parhanan di cas (galinja, pato, ganso, calacuna) pero no ta frecuente den parhanan silvestre.

Segun BirdLife International, no tin ningun evidencia cu ta indica cu infeccion cu HPAI den hende a ser causa dor di parhanan silvestre. Infeccionan den hende a pasa cu hende cu tawata tin di haber cu galinja den nan cercania. Sinembargo, tin un posibilidad cu e virus aki por muta pa un otro forma cu por ser transmiti di hende pa hende. Si esaki pasa e por propaga rond mundo masha lihe mes.

Aunke e proximo pandemia ta imposibel pa predecir, e ta casi 37 aña pasa caba desde cu nos a experencia e ultimo pandemia. E periodo mas largo entre pandemianan anota tawata di 39 aña. Tur locual ta necesario pa un pandemia pasa ta pa e virus HPAI adapta su mes pa haci posibel e transmision di hende pa hende. Di acuerdo cu e ultimo hayazgonan virologico y observacionan e señalan tey cu un pandemia ta inminente.

E poblacion di America Latina y e Area di Caribe ta wordu calcula di tin 560 miyon di hende na 2005. Esaki ta representa 9% di e poblacion mundial: 77% di e poblacion aki ta urbano. Historicamente e pandemianan di influenza semper a gara mundo di sorpresa lagando un tempo minimal pa serviccionan di salud prepara nan mes pa un incremento abrupto di casonan di hende malo y mortonan cu ta caracteriza e eventonan aki y locual ta haci cu nan ta causa asina tanto disrupcion.

Cu e limitacionan potencial aki, e reforzamento di servicio di cuidu di salud lo ta vital durante e etapa di preparacion pa un pandemia ya cu ainda pa sistemanan di cuidu di salud cu ta funciona eficientemente durante circunstancianan normal no ta bai tin e capacidad suficiente pa cumpli cu e aumento drastico di demanda pa cuidu

mediato den un evento pandemico.

Den lineanan general, autoridadnan di salud publico den nos region ta reconoce e riesgo di un pandemia di influenza y su posibel impacto riba nos poblacion. Pero e desaroyo di un plan di preparacion pa un evento pandemico no semper tin prioridad. Esaki hopi biaha tin cu competi cu hopi otro tema di salud y ta carece di e recursonan humano necesario pa dedica tempo y esfuerzo pa enfrente e menaza potencial aki.