Pandemic H1N1 Influenza in 2009

Department of Health
Hong Kong
October 2011
Phases and strategies
## Chronology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Mar</td>
<td>Mexico began picking up flu cases</td>
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<td>23 Apr</td>
<td>16 cases in Mexico confirmed swine flu</td>
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<td>26 Apr</td>
<td>HK influenza alert level to &quot;serious&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 May</td>
<td>HK confirmed first imported case</td>
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<td>HK influenza alert level to &quot;emergency&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Jun</td>
<td>HK confirmed first local case</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 June</td>
<td>HK confirmed first outbreak</td>
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<td>World Health Organization raised its pandemic alert level to the highest, phase six</td>
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Containment & mitigation phases

**Containment phase**
- Prevent disease introduction /delay local transmission

**Mitigation phase**
- Reduce impact of the disease

**First imported case**

**First local case**
Public health strategies: Containment

• **DELAY**, not prevent, local transmission for as long as possible

• When: no / small number of cases, limited local transmission

• Buy time for
  - understanding virus properties
  - development of diagnostic tests
  - medical services preparation
  - school holiday
  - vaccine
HK containment strategies

- Case isolation
- Contact tracing
  - Close contacts
    - more stringent public health measures, such as quarantine, chemoprophylaxis
  - Social contacts
    - medical surveillance
    - observance of personal hygiene, +/- chemoprophylaxis
- Quarantine & medical surveillance
  - normally 5-7 days from last known contact
Temperature screening & health declaration at border
Transition point

- 1st local case confirmed on 10 June
  - 40 days after 1st imported case

- Outbreak of HSI in St. Paul’s Convent School (Secondary Section) on 11 June
  - 1st cluster of indigenous HSI cases in HK

- Gradual transition from containment to mitigation
HK mitigation objectives

• Slow down epidemic progress
  - Prevent large explosive outbreaks

• Focus on individuals at risk of serious illness

• Avoid overloading medical system

• Reduce impact of epidemic on society
Mitigation phase measures

- Social distancing
  - Class suspension / early summer breaks for
    - All primary schools, kindergartens, child-care centres and special schools
    - Secondary schools with confirmed case(s)
- Activation of 8 Designated Flu Clinics (DFCs) for patients with fever & flu
- Personal hygiene campaign
- Risk communication to different community segments
- Provide information and guidelines to different sectors, and mobilize them to initiate response plans
Strategies in preparation for second wave

- Continued surveillance
- Vaccination
- Promotion of hand and respiratory hygiene
- Observe for warning signs
- Antiviral and antibiotics
- Social distancing - class suspension, avoidance of major gatherings
- Risk communication
  - Public, stakeholders, healthcare professionals
- Provision of health services
Lesson Learned (1) – A clear command structure according to the response level of pandemic preparedness plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Level</th>
<th>Public Health Objectives</th>
<th>Command Structure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alert (e.g. novel influenza like avian influenza occurred outside or in animal)</td>
<td>Prevent import of disease</td>
<td>A simplified command structure headed by Food and Health Bureau and relevant departments under the Bureau to assess the nature and level of risk and implement measures accordingly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Serious (e.g. novel influenza occurred in human)</td>
<td>Detect and contain disease early</td>
<td>A Steering Committee chaired by the Secretary for Food and Health will be convened to steer government response</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency (e.g. efficient human to human transmission of novel influenza)</td>
<td>Minimise mortality and morbidity</td>
<td>A Steering Committee chaired by the Chief Executive of Hong Kong will be convened to steer government response</td>
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Lesson Learned (2) - A proactive risk communication approach

The objectives of these risk communication activities are:-

• To inform the community of the latest disease situation and associated risks
• To help the public to anticipate upcoming scenarios
• To explain public health strategies against the disease
• To gain support for government measures and engage the public to join hands to fight against the pandemic
Lesson Learned (3) - To err on the side of caution in case of uncertainty with transparent communication

- knowledge gaps, especially at the beginning of the pandemic

- more acceptable by the public if the government errs on the side of caution and implements more stringent control measures than adopting a reassuring approach at the beginning of the outbreak.
Thank you