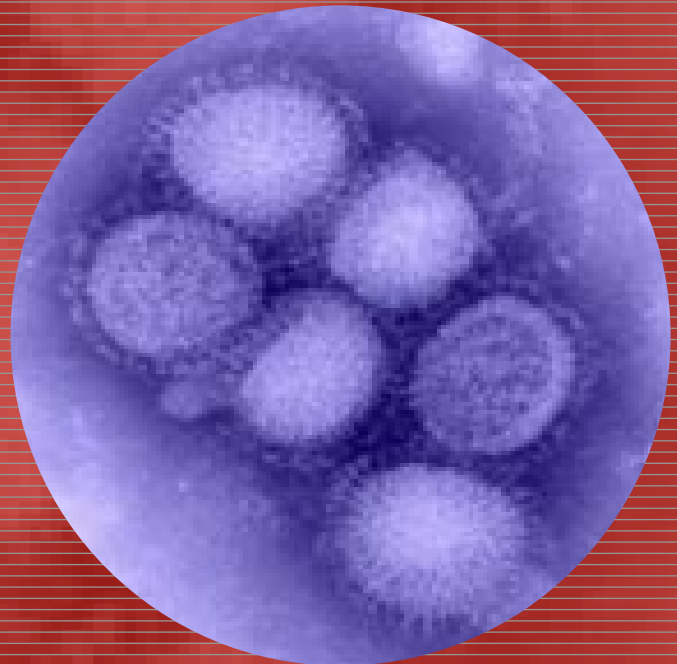


Chronology of Influenza A (H1N1)



Compiled by
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March 18- May 22, 2009

March 18 – Mexican authorities begin picking up cases of what the World Health Organization calls an "influenza-like-illness", while in the weeks prior to the first recorded swine flu death; local media in Mexico was reporting an increase in instances of flu-like illnesses.

April 12 – A 39-year old woman suffering from an acute respiratory illness and undergoes treatment for five days in a hospital in Oaxaca, Mexico, and subsequently dies.

Subsequently, local health authorities trace people who have been in contact with the woman and find some are displaying mild symptoms of pneumonia. They note that over 5,000 cases of pneumonia occur annually in Oaxaca and the woman's death is declared an isolated incident.

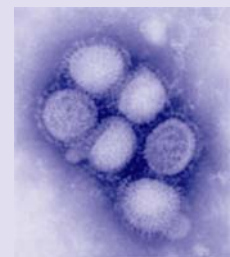
April 16 – Mexican health officials contact the Pan-American Health Organization, over the illness.

April 21 – Oaxaca health department confirms a second death from the atypical pneumonia. Fearing an outbreak of what they believe could be avian flu, the hospital where the two deaths occurred establishes quarantine in its emergency room.

April 22 – The Mexican health ministry issues a nationwide alert and samples are sent to Canada for testing.

April 23 – Mexico reports first cases of H1N1 to WHO. In the US, public health officials announce that seven people in California and Texas have been diagnosed with a flu virus known as H1N1, but all seven recovered. At the time it is unclear whether these cases are related to Mexico's outbreak.

Later in the day, Canadian public health authorities announce that the Mexican virus is the H1N1 "swine flu" virus.



April 24 – Health authorities around the world go on alert as the World Health Organization announces that several hundred cases of swine flu in humans have been suspected over the past weeks in Mexico. They include what is eventually identified as around 15 fatalities, although many more are initially blamed on the virus, while there are nearly a dozen cases in the United States.

Mexican authorities speak for the first time of an "epidemic." More than 1000 people in the country are placed under observation.

Schools, universities, theatres and museums are closed down in Mexico City and in the city centre to prevent the spread of the disease.

Neighbouring Latin American countries declare health alerts or announce preventative measures.

April 25 – WHO Director-General convenes Emergency Committee in Geneva under International Health Regulations (2005). This is the first such meeting called to advise the Director-General on a public health emergency. It recommends that a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) be declared.

WHO warns of the "pandemic potential" of the new swine flu virus, which can be transmitted from human to human.

More cases are found in the United States.

Mexico toughens measures against the disease and orders people who are sick or showing symptoms of the disease to be isolated.

The South-East Asia Regional Office's Strategic Health Operation Centre activated.

April 26 – The United States declares a health emergency after the confirmation of a total of 20 cases in the country, including eight students in New York.

Canada announces its first cases of swine flu.

Countries around the world step up vigilance and precautionary measures as WHO warns that the virus can mutate at any time and become much more dangerous. Public meetings are suspended in Mexico.

April 27 – The first confirmed cases in Europe, in Spain and Scotland, in people who have returned from Mexico.

WHO raises its alert level from 3 to 4 on a scale of 6, signaling a "significant increase in risk of a pandemic." It warns that no region in the world is safe from the virus.

Communicable Diseases Surveillance and Response Unit presents the first Influenza A (H1N1) update at Monday Morning Meeting in the Regional Office for South-East Asia with specifics on the number of cases and areas affected.

Emergency Committee Meeting #2 held to declare Phase 4.



April 28 – The epidemic continues to progress, affecting all five continents in the world -- from New Zealand to Israel to Costa Rica.

A state of emergency is declared in California.

Several countries suspend their pork imports from infected regions.

Joint South-East Asia Regional Office IHR Task Force and Crisis Management Team meeting held with the Regional Director.

April 29 – The first confirmed death in the United States for H1N1 is a 23-month old Mexican toddler.

The virus spreads in Europe, where first cases are confirmed in Germany and Austria. New cases are declared in Spain, of which one person had not been to Mexico.

WHO raises to five its level of alert on a scale of six calling on countries to prepare for an "imminent" pandemic.

WHO officially refers to this disease as New Influenza A (H1N1).

Video Conference between WHO Director-General and Regional Offices.

Daily International Health Regulations (IHR) taskforce discussion in Regional Office. Four core working groups formed to cover Surveillance/Monitoring & Laboratory, Logistics and Management, Communication and Health Education and Medical & Health Systems.

WHO declares Phase 5.



April 30 – Regional Office for South-East Asia holds press conference – 35 journalists attend with live coverage on several TV channels.

The European Union rules out a French idea to suspend flights to Mexico. WHO does not recommend limiting travel but Britain, Canada, France, Italy and the Netherlands advise people against travelling to Mexico.



WHO, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) issue a joint statement stating pork and pork products "will not be a source of infection" if handled in accordance with good hygienic practices.

May 1 – SEARO holds Video Conference with all WHO representatives in 11 Member States of the Region.

Mexico begins a five-day shutdown at the start of a May Day weekend to try to contain a flu epidemic which the government now says appeared to be "not so aggressive" as initially feared.

The first confirmed case of swine flu in Asia is recorded in Hong Kong after a Mexican man who arrived via Shanghai tested positive. Guests and staff at the hotel where he had stayed are placed under quarantine for a week.

WHO says it has "no doubt" that a successful vaccine against the swine flu virus could be developed within the next six months.



May 2 – Mexico says the flu epidemic appears to be "in a stabilization phase", but the toll in the country rises to 19 dead and 454 confirmed infections.

WHO says 16 countries have officially reported 658 confirmed cases of influenza A(H1N1), but that there is no indication that it has begun to spread in a sustained manner anywhere outside of North America.

Canada on 2 May reported the identification of the A(H1N1) virus in a swine herd in Alberta. It is highly probable that the pigs were exposed to the virus from a Canadian farm worker recently returned from Mexico, who had exhibited flu-like symptoms and had contact with the pigs.

Three new countries (Costa Rica, France and Republic of Korea) have reported cases (one, two and one respectively).

May 3 – WHO says 18 countries have officially reported 898 cases of influenza A(H1N1) infection.

WHO's Director-General informs Regional Directors of decision to deploy Oseltamivir to 72 least developed countries.



May 4 – WHO says 21 countries have officially reported 1085 cases of influenza A (H1N1) infection, 26 deaths.

Three new countries (Colombia, El Salvador, and Italy) have reported cases (one, two and two respectively).

WHO Director-general addresses the UN General Assembly: stresses uncertainty, lessons from past pandemics, limited amount of antivirals and vaccines, and the need for solidarity

May 5 – WHO reports 1490 cases from 21 countries and 30 deaths.

WHO dispatches 2.4 million courses of antivirals to 72 countries most in need, including Mexico. These were dispatched from Geneva and Basel in Switzerland, Maryland in the US and Dubai in the United Arab Emirates.

Scientific Committee meets to discuss a range of issues including the development of the Influenza A (H1N1) virus and issues around its severity.

May 6 – WHO reports 1893 cases from 23 countries and 31 deaths. Two new countries (Guatemala and Sweden) have reported cases (one each).

WHO SEARO distributed about 60,000 doses of Oseltamivir and Personal Protection Equipment to its Member States.

May 7 – WHO reports 2371 cases from 24 countries with 44 deaths.

One new country (Poland) confirms one case of A/H1N1.

Dr Keiji Fukuda, Assistant Director General for Health Security and Environment, briefs Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) members at Special Health Ministers meeting in Bangkok on WHO's pandemic response and the implications of moving from phase 5 to phase 6.



Editorial in Nature praises WHO's communications efforts in the A/H1N1 response.

May 8 – WHO reports 2500 cases from 25 countries and 46 deaths.

One new country (Brazil) confirms four cases of A/H1N1.

WHO Director-General addresses the ASEAN+3 Health Ministers' Special Meeting on A/H1N1 via video link.

May 9 – WHO reports 3453 cases from 29 countries and 48 deaths.

Four new countries (Argentina, Australia, Japan and Panama) confirm cases of A/H1N1.

May 10 – WHO reports 4393 cases from 30 countries 42 deaths.

One new country (Norway) confirms two cases.

Number of news stories on the topic down to about 25% of peak.

Teleconference held with the International Federation of Pharmaceutical.

Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA), the Developing Countries Vaccine Manufacturers' Network, and other influenza vaccine manufacturers to review the latest information about bio-security and conditions for working with vaccine viruses, and the availability of these strains.

May 11 – WHO reports 4789 cases from 30 countries and 53 deaths.

May 12 – WHO reports 5269 cases from 30 countries and 61 deaths.

Thailand confirms its first two cases of H1N1 at a press conference at 1400 hours BKK time. The two teenagers had recently returned from Mexico. Eighteen passengers on the same flight who sat close to the two teenagers were contacted and given oseltamivir.

May 13 – WHO reports 6302 cases from 33 countries.

Three new countries (Cuba (1), Finland (2) and Thailand (2)) confirm cases.

The "Gibbs article" hypothesizing on the origin of the new H1N1 virus suggests that the virus might have grown in eggs and released in an accident.

May 14 – WHO reports 7457 cases from 34 countries, and 65 deaths.

One new country (Belgium) confirms one case.

Indian Drug manufacturer, Cipla, receives pre-qualification by WHO for production of oseltamivir. Prequalification means that Cipla's product meets WHO standards for quality.

A vaccine advisory group meeting held at WHO HQ. The objective is to ascertain whether enough evidence exists to recommend large-scale A(H1N1) vaccine production.

May 15 – 34 countries have officially reported 7520 cases of influenza A(H1N1) infection and 65 deaths.

Of the 72 countries and six WHO regional offices where WHO sent a total of 3 million antiviral doses from its global stockpile on 5 May, all deliveries have been made except for seven countries (Burkina Faso, Niger, Cuba, Pakistan, DPRK, Honduras and Indonesia).



Start of Inter-government meeting on Virus Sharing held to address novel influenza virus sharing and benefits like vaccines and anti-virals.

May 16 – India's first confirmed case of H1N1 reported. The 23-year-old male passenger from New York, USA arrived in Hyderabad on Wednesday 13 May. His laboratory sample was confirmed. He was shifted to an isolation facility and treated with oseltamivir and has since recovered.

May 17 – 39 countries have officially reported 8480 cases of influenza A(H1N1) infection and 72 deaths to WHO.

Japan reports 21 new confirmed cases from students at three high schools in Kobe and nine students at a high school in Osaka. All the new cases appear to have acquired the virus independently and have not traveled recently to countries affected by influenza A(H1N1).

May 18 – Japan reports 118 new cases over the last 24 hours.

Sixty second World Health Assembly begins in Geneva. At the start of the session, several Member States ask that WHO reflect and consider before moving to Phase 6.

All 72 countries receive their consignments of oseltamivir antiviral courses that WHO started sending on 5 May. WHO sent 3 million courses of the drug.

May 19 – Health Ministers from 11 Member States of the South East Asia Region adopt a joint statement during the sixty second session of the WHA towards concerted policy action to minimize the impact of the potential influenza pandemic in the Region.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and WHO Director General Dr Margaret Chan meet with around 30 pharmaceutical manufacturers and discuss the need for equity and fairness in access to vaccines for developing countries.

May 21 – High profile meetings – WHA: Agenda item 12.1 on Pandemic influenza preparedness: sharing of influenza viruses and access to vaccines and other benefits." Member States call on WHO Director General to consider giving "extra flexibility" for deciding on Phase levels under IHR.



May 22 – Sixty second World Health Assembly concludes with the Director General emphasizing that –“the decision to declare an influenza pandemic is a responsibility, and a duty, that she takes seriously”.

Weekly Epidemiological Record issued today has particular focus on Clinical observations on H1N1 patients.

June 1 – WHO carries out consultations with over 30 experts from 23 countries to consider countries' needs and concerns and the steps WHO needs to take when considering when and if to go to Phase 6.

June 5 – WHO Director-General convenes the third meeting of the International Health Regulations (IHR) Emergency Committee. The purpose of the meeting was to update the committee on the global situation and seek advice on proposals to introduce severity assessments in any future announcements of pandemic phase changes by WHO.

June 9 – WHO/SEARO organizes a three-day regional training workshop on PCR based laboratory diagnosis of influenza A H1N1 at NIH Thailand.

June 11 – The Emergency Committee holds its fourth meeting to consider available information on transmission of New influenza A (H1N1) in a number of locations in countries in different regions of the World Health Organization, and concludes that the criteria for a pandemic have been met.

WHO Director General declares that “the world is now at the start of the 2009 influenza pandemic”.
