

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (62) in DH SEB CD/8/27/1 Pt.19

4 February, 2013

Dear Medical Superintendent,

Hong Kong Enters Influenza Season

Further to our letter dated 16 January 2013 regarding the reactivation of the enhanced surveillance for severe seasonal influenza, please kindly note that our latest surveillance data showed that there was an increase in the local influenza activity, signaling the arrival of the winter influenza season. The number of ILI outbreaks increased from 0 in the week ending 5 January, 2013 to 8 in the week ending 2 February, 2013. The influenza-like illness (ILI) consultation rates among sentinel general outpatient clinics (GOPCs) increased from 1.9 in the week ending 5 January, 2013 to 4.9 in the week ending 26 January, 2013. The corresponding rates among sentinel private doctors increased from 34.2 in the week ending 5 January, 2013 to 43.6 in the week ending 26 January, 2013. The number of influenza virus detections reported also increased from 48 in the week ending 5 January, 2013 to 133 in the week ending 2 February, 2013. The circulating influenza viruses detected include influenza A(H1N1)2009 (54.9%), followed by influenza A(H3N2) (42.1%) and influenza B (3.0%). Antigenic analysis and genetic sequencing of recent flu virus does not show any new or significant changes and vast majority of flu viruses are still sensitive to the antiviral drugs, oseltamivir and zanamivir. So far, the viruses circulating in this season remain well-matched with the vaccine viruses for the 2012/13 season. Vaccination remains the best protection against influenza.

The local influenza activity is expected to further increase during the coming few weeks. We would like to solicit your support to advise target groups to make use of the last opportunity to receive influenza vaccination before the peak activity reaches. Members of the public are reminded to take the following measures to prevent influenza and other respiratory illnesses:

- To build up good body immunity by having a proper diet, regular exercise and adequate rest, reducing stress and avoiding smoking;
- To maintain good personal and environmental hygiene;



- To wash hands after sneezing, coughing or cleaning the nose;
- To maintain good ventilation;
- To avoid visiting crowded places with poor ventilation; and
- Children with acute febrile illness should not attend school till 48 hours post-defervescence.

You may wish to refer to the Flu Express at the CHP website (<http://www.chp.gov.hk>) for updated information on influenza activities. You are also reminded to report outbreaks of respiratory illnesses occurring in institutional settings to our Central Notification Office (Tel: 2477-2772; Fax: 2477-2770; CENO On-line: <http://www.chp.gov.hk/ceno>) for prompt epidemiological investigations and control measures.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your continuous support in combating infectious disease in Hong Kong.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read 'SK CHUANG', is positioned below the closing text.

(Dr. SK CHUANG)
for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health