



Glen Abbot Ltd.

Swine Flu Briefing 42 – 08/11/2009

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Current Situation:

In the UK the spread of the H1N1 virus has slowed quite considerably this week. In England this week, to 84,000 cases, up from 78,000 the week before. In Scotland the number has actually declined to 17,487 people compared with 19,200 cases reported in the previous week.

It isn't quite as easy to make comparisons for Wales and Northern Ireland but from what I have been able to gather In Wales, 1,971 people contacted their GP in the last week with flu-like symptoms, compared with 2,626 the week before.

In Northern Ireland, 215 laboratory-confirmed cases were reported in the last week, compared with 142 in the previous week.

Although the number of cases has remained fairly static this week, Sir Liam Donaldson has stated that: "there has been a snowballing of cases in intensive care units in recent weeks which is giving us real concern.

In the USA the CDC stated that: *for influenza-like illness (ILI) nationally decreased very slightly this week (to 31 October) over last week after four consecutive weeks of sharp increases. While ILI declined slightly, visits to doctors for influenza-like illness remain at much higher levels than what is expected for this time of the year and parts of the country continue to see sharp increases in activity. It's possible that nationwide ILI could rise again. ILI continues to be higher than what is seen during the peak of most regular flu seasons.*

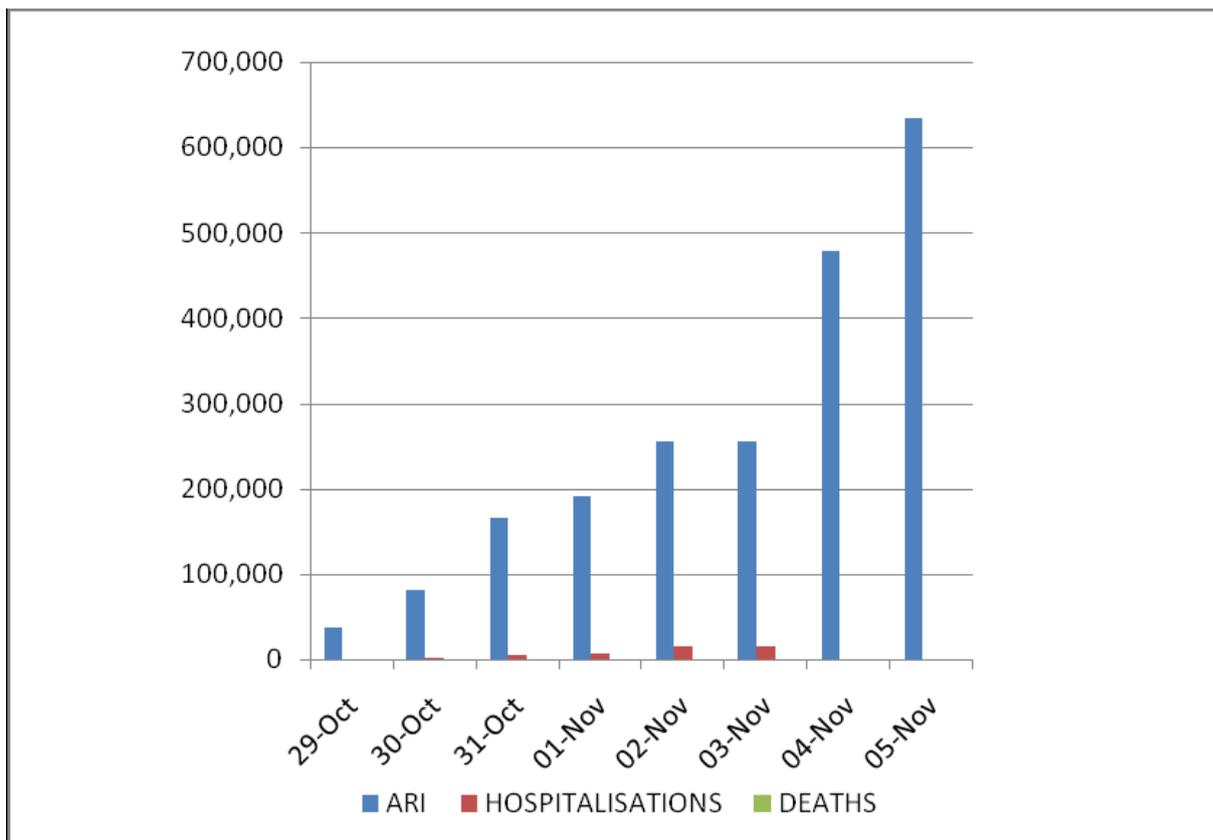
What IS happening in the Ukraine?

As I mentioned last week the Ukraine appears to be suffering badly from H1N1 and taking fairly drastic actions. There have been a number of websites claiming that there has been a mutation of H1N1, and other suggestions of problems but as far as I can ascertain this is just the conspiracy theorists at work again. There are also suggestions that there may be political elements to this as there is an election due.

However there is no doubt that the Ukraine is having problems. On Friday the ECDC gave out the following:

The Ministry of Health has reported yesterday 633,877 cases of acute respiratory illness and 95 deaths related to acute respiratory illness, which represents a significant increase compared to the previous day (+32% for the number of cases and + 10% for the number of deaths). Ukraine called on the EU through the Community Civil Protection Mechanism on 31 October for help to deal with this situation.

This graph shows just how quickly the spread is happening in the Ukraine



Jumping the species...

I copy this story I picked up from Reuters. I make no comment and I have not included the section which began...No Kissing.....!

WASHINGTON, Nov 6 (Reuters) - People who think they may have H1N1 flu need to stay away from work, avoid sneezing on their spouses and children and now, they have someone else to worry about infecting too -- their pets.

U.S. vets reported this week that a pet cat had been infected with the pandemic swine flu virus, apparently by its owners, who had reported flu-like illness in the days before. Two pet ferrets also caught flu, again apparently from their owners, and several herds of pigs around the world have been reported infected.

Animals have long been known to be a source of new infections. Influenza itself originates in birds, possibly domestic ducks. AIDS appears to have come from chimpanzees and possibly gorillas. Ebola virus comes from bats while rabies is spread by many different species.

And this strain of H1N1 very likely originated in pigs although it is now infecting almost exclusively humans.

But with flu, at least, it can go the other way, too.

"This is just another illustration of why influenza viruses are so tricky and frustrating and interesting at the same time, is this ability to occasionally jump species," said Dr. Carolyn Bridges of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Bridges said it is impossible to know how many pets may have been infected -- this particular cat lived near a sophisticated animal laboratory in Iowa where vets ran an influenza test out of curiosity. The good news is that the cat survived.

Cats were known to get H5N1 avian influenza, which is still circulating and which has killed snow leopards and tigers that were fed infected chickens. A strain called H3N8 can sicken and kill pet dogs.

Seasonal flu and H1N1

I often get asked if the H1N1 pandemic will mean that we will have little or no seasonal flu and my view has always been that the two could be mutually exclusive and both circulate. Well here is the view of the ECDC, which monitors disease in the European Union and European free trade area (EFTA), it has said it was hard to predict what the mix of pandemic and seasonal flu viruses would bring but there was a risk of seasonal flu epidemics "early in 2010 when the pandemic waves have passed".

Who is most at risk?

The ECDC said experience from the United States and the southern hemisphere showed pregnant women with the virus are 10 times more likely to need intensive care than those with no risk factors. Those with asthma and chronic respiratory diseases have three times the risk and the very obese six times the risk. But it also said evidence so far shows some 20 to 30 percent of H1N1 deaths are among healthy young people.

Events this week

I am involved in two pandemic events this week; on Thursday I am one of the plenary speakers at the BCI World Conference in London. If any of you are there please come and introduce yourselves.

On the same day I am doing a webinar for the Scottish Government aimed at businesses to help them prepare for a pandemic. Many of you will have heard my webinars in the past but if you haven't you would be welcome on this one (even if you are not in Scotland!). It will be at a fairly basic level as it has to cover all levels of knowledge, but if you know anyone who might be interested please feel free to pass on the details. It starts at 1230 UK time.

<https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/796534907>

Past Briefings

All previous briefings are available at our website: www.glenabbot.co.uk

Training and Consultancy

We provide specific pandemic training courses both publicly and bespoke to companies. If you are interested please contact me directly or email Geoff Howard at Continuity Shop (ghoward@continuityshop.com). We can also help organisation review or create plans so if you need any assistance please contact me via this email or Andrew Sinclair on Andrew.sinclair@glenabbot.co.uk. Our office number is 01738 580580.



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