

Glen Abbot Ltd.

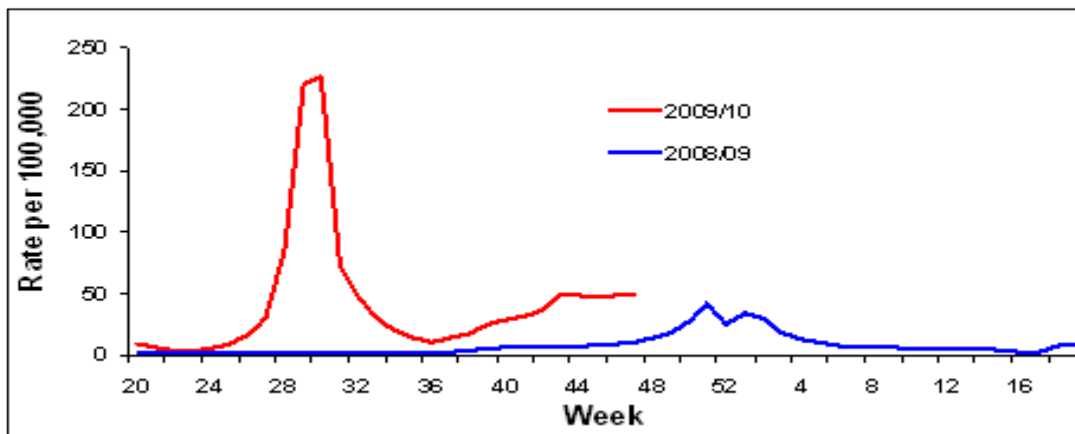
Swine Flu Briefing 45 – 29/11/2009

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Current Situation:

In England this week it is estimated that there were 46,000 new cases down from 53,000 last week.

Weekly consultation rate for flu-like illness in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (all ages)



In Scotland last week the number of cases was 21,100 down 100 from the previous week.

In the USA there was also a slight decline this week. Most European countries reported a increased level.

Increasing death rates

There has been much in the media and the internet this week on the fact that the death rate from H1N1 has increased by 1,000 from the previous week, the highest weekly increase there has been.

So do we need to start worrying? It doesn't seem so. Remember we are in the flu season now and flu kills several hundred thousand people every year. The weather is turning colder and infections for those in poor health increase.

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There is no evidence that the H1N1 virus has become more deadly or changed in any way to increase the risk.

Mutations

Although I said above that H1N1 hasn't become more deadly there has been some very small evidence of mutations. France, Norway, Canada and several others have found mutated variants. Is this a risk? Well as I said on last week's briefing again it does not seem so.

Flu virus mutations are something that is expected and seen regularly. None has yet developed the ability to supplant H1N1.

And the answer is....garlic!

I quote this from Reuters.....

The price of garlic in China has nearly quadrupled since March, propelled by its very pungency to rank ahead of gold and stocks as the country's best-performing asset this year.

The trigger for the bull run may have been the idea that the potent bulb can ward off H1N1 swine flu, Morgan Stanley economists said.

That chimes with some anecdotal evidence. The China Daily reported last week that a high school in Hangzhou, a prosperous city in eastern China, had bought 200 kg of garlic and forced students to eat it every day for lunch to stay healthy.

"I don't know about H1N1, but it can prevent ordinary colds," Zhang Ping, 74, told Reuters at a vegetable market in Beijing. "Take me. I've not had cold for many years and every year I buy several dozen pounds of garlic"

Actually I suspect some of the success may be down to the fact that if you eat that much garlic, social distancing becomes much easier to implement!

Secondary infections

For some time I have been aware of the fact that some, especially teenagers, seem to get a second illness within a few weeks of having H1N1. To date I have not been able to find any published evidence but I found this on Reuters this week. However from Reuters I picked this up on secondary infections.

U.S. health officials said on Wednesday they are seeing a worrying pattern of serious bacterial infections in swine flu patients, mostly among younger adults not normally vulnerable to them.

The pattern is typical of pandemics such as the current [H1N1](#) pandemic but shows the need for patients and doctors to keep an eye out for the infections and treat them quickly, Dr. Anne Schuchat of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention told reporters.

"We are seeing an increase of serious pneumococcal infections around the country," Schuchat told a telephone briefing.

"That is the serious type of pneumococcal disease where the bacteria invades the blood and other internal sites." These so-called secondary infections can follow infection with a virus such as flu and often are seen among people who die from influenza.

H5N1.... Remember that?

It seems so long now since we were all convinced that H5N1 Bird Flu would strike and then along came the mild cousin H1N1 and all was (relatively) well. But H5N1 hasn't gone away.

In China this is causing concern Zhong Nanshan, director of the Guangzhou Institute of Respiratory Diseases in China's southern Guangdong province, said the presence of both viruses in China meant they could mix and become a hybrid.

The World Health Organization warned that H5N1 had erupted in poultry in Egypt, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam.

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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