

Glen Abbot Ltd.

Swine Flu Briefing 23 – 06/07/2009

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Current Situation:

H1N1 continues to spread at the predicted pace. At present some 90,000 are infected world wide.

The UK Government expects the level of infection to reach 100,000 per day later this year. The good news is that the virus remains mild and the level of fatalities very low and almost all with underlying health conditions.

All of the UK has now moved to a treatment phase to manage the outbreak. The statement from the Government included the following information:

'.....GPs will now diagnose cases on the basis of clinical observation rather than laboratory testing. Everyone who has flu-like symptoms will be assessed by a doctor and may be given antivirals to manage their illness. Routine swabbing of suspected cases will now stop, and the Health Protection Agency will no longer trace close contacts and provide antivirals to limit spread.'

Reports of Tamiflu resistance

There have been three reports, from Hong Kong, Denmark and Japan, of a patient being resistant to Tamiflu. Is this of concern? Very unlikely. Given the number of cases, to only have three such reports seems to be pretty good news.

"You can always expect a certain number of resistances," said Roche (the manufacturer of Tamiflu) spokeswoman Claudia Schmitt. "It does not necessarily mean that the strain is resistant to Tamiflu."

In the statement mentioned above from Secretary of State for Health, Andy Burnham, the following on antivirals was included. Possibly the first you may have seen that they reduce the shedding of the virus.

Antivirals used in the treatment of flu are not a 'cure'. They reduce the virus spreading in the body, help the patient to recover more quickly and reduce the risk of complications. They also reduce shedding of the virus by infected people so that its spread may be delayed. However they do not offer longer term protection.

Is travel safe?

As summer holiday season starts in the Northern Hemisphere many people are worried about travel. The UK Government have not suggested any imposition of such restrictions. I include a statement from Margaret Chan, Director-General of the WHO, at a meeting in Cancun last week.

'Recommendations to avoid travel to Mexico, or to any other country or area with confirmed cases, serve no purpose. They do not protect the public. They do not contain the outbreak. And they do not prevent further international spread.'

Future Briefings

Given that changes are now happening I will issue briefings in line with the spread. Weekly is probably still suitable at this stage but I will increase if necessary. All 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.

Yours sincerely



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