An additional country has reported confirmed cases of Influenza A/H1N1. Between 8 and 9 of May, Panama notified 3 confirmed cases of Influenza A/H1N1. As of 9 May 2009, the total number of confirmed cases of Influenza A (H1N1) recorded is 4,175, including 52 deaths, in 10 countries of the Americas (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama and the United States).

To date, the United States has confirmed a total of 2,254 cases of Influenza A (H1N1), including 2 deaths in Texas, in 44 States (including the District of Columbia): 4 in Alabama, 182 in Arizona, 171 in California, 41 in Colorado, 14 in Connecticut, 44 in Delaware, 43 in Florida, 3 in Georgia, 6 in Hawaii, 1 in Idaho, 421 in Illinois, 39 in Indiana, 43 in Iowa, 12 in Kansas, 3 in Kentucky, 9 in Louisiana, 4 in Maine, 23 in Maryland, 89 in Massachusetts, 103 in Michigan, 1 in Minnesota, 10 in Missouri, 13 in Nebraska, 9 in Nevada, 4 in New Hampshire, 7 in New Jersey, 30 in New México, 190 in New York, 7 in North Carolina, 12 in Ohio, 4 in Oklahoma, 15 in Oregon, 10 in Pennsylvania, 7 in Rhode Island, 42 in South Carolina, 1 in South Dakota, 46 in Tennessee, 110 in Texas, 60 in Utah, 1 in Vermont, 16 in Virginia, 83 in Washington, 4 in Washington D.C. and 317 in Wisconsin. Other suspected cases are being investigated.

From 1 March to 8 May, Mexico has reported 1,626 confirmed cases of Influenza A (H1N1), including 48 deaths, in 29 of 32 States. The states with the highest number of confirmed cases are the Federal District (Mexico City), Mexico State, San Luis Potosí and Hidalgo. The majority of these cases have occurred in previously healthy young adults.

In Canada, to date 280 human cases of Influenza A (H1N1) have been confirmed, including 1 death in Alberta, in 9 of 13 Provinces: (46 in Alberta, 79 in British Columbia, 2 in New Brunswick, 56 in Nova Scotia, 15 in Quebec, 1 in Manitoba, 76 in Ontario, 3 in Prince Edward Island and 2 in Saskatchewan). Some of the cases had recent travel history to Mexico. Most of the cases developed a mild form of influenza-like illness. Some of the cases also presented gastrointestinal symptoms. Indigenous transmission is not discarded since not all of the confirmed cases have recent travel history to Mexico.

On 2 May, Costa Rica notified 1 confirmed case of Influenza A (H1N1) who was confirmed today to have died. On 3 May, Colombia reported 1 confirmed case of Influenza A (H1N1), while El Salvador reported 2 confirmed cases of Influenza A (H1N1). On 5 May, Guatemala notified 1 confirmed case of Influenza A (H1N1) in a person that had travelled to Mexico. On 7 May Brazil reported 4 confirmed cases of Influenza A (H1N1), with an additional 2 cases reported yesterday. On 8 May, Argentina reported the confirmation of 1 confirmed case of Influenza A (H1N1) with travel history to Mexico. Between yesterday evening and today, Panama has notified 3 confirmed cases of Influenza A (H1N1).

Various countries of the Region are reporting suspected and probable cases. This indicates that surveillance enhancement is producing results.
International Health Regulations (IHR)

The Director-General of WHO determined on 25 April that this event constitutes a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. On 29 April, the Director General decided to raise the pandemic alert to Phase 5.

The DG recommends not closing borders or restricting travel. However, it is prudent for people who are sick to delay travel. Moreover, returning travelers who have become sick should seek medical attention in line with guidance from national authorities.

Recommendations

Enhanced Surveillance

At this time, enhanced surveillance is recommended. On its Web page, PAHO has published orientations for the enhancement of surveillance activities, which are directed to the investigation of:

- Clusters of cases of ILI/SARI of unknown cause
- Severe respiratory disease occurring in one or more health workers
- Changes in the epidemiology of mortality associated with ILI/SARI; increase of observed deaths by respiratory diseases; or increase of the emergence of severe respiratory disease in previously healthy adults/adolescents.
- Persistent changes observed in the response to the treatment or evolution of a SARI.

The following risk factors should also cause suspicion of Influenza A (H1N1):

- Close contact with a confirmed case of Influenza A (H1N1) while the case was sick.
- Recent travel to an area where there are confirmed cases of Influenza A (H1N1) have been confirmed

Virological Surveillance of Influenza A (H1N1)

It is recommended that National Influenza Centers (NIC) immediately submit to their regular WHO Collaborating Center for influenza all positive but unsubtypable specimens of Influenza A. Shipment procedures are the same as those used by NICs for seasonal influenza specimens.

The test protocols for the detection of seasonal influenza by Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) cannot confirm Influenza A (H1N1) cases. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the United States (CDC) has begun to ship testing kits that will include the primers and probes as well as the required positive control samples.

Current available evidence indicates that the technique of Immunofluorescence (IF) has low sensitivity for the identification of the new Influenza A virus (H1N1). As a result, its results are not recommended as a basis to rule out suspected cases. Furthermore, the suspected cases with positive results for Influenza A, but unsubtypable, obtained by PCR have a high probability of being confirmed as cases of the new Influenza A virus (H1N1).
Case Definitions

The following case definitions are for the purpose of reporting probable and confirmed cases of Influenza A (H1N1) virus infection to WHO.

Clinical case description

Acute febrile respiratory illness (fever >38°C) with the spectrum of disease from influenza-like illness to pneumonia.

1. A Confirmed case of Influenza A(H1N1) virus infection is defined as an individual with laboratory confirmed Influenza A(H1N1) virus infection by one or more of the following tests*:
   - Real time RT-PCR
   - viral culture
   - four-fold rise in Influenza A(H1N1) virus specific neutralizing antibodies.

2. A Probable case of Influenza A(H1N1) virus infection is defined as an individual with an influenza test that is positive for Influenza A, but is unsubtypable by reagents used to detect seasonal influenza virus infection OR An individual with a clinically compatible illness or who died of an unexplained acute respiratory illness who is considered to be epidemiologically linked to a probable or confirmed case.

* Note: The test(s) should be performed according to the most currently available guidance on testing (http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html).

Infection prevention and control in health care facilities

Since the main form of transmission of this disease is by droplets it is recommended strengthening the basic precautions to prevent their dissemination, for example the hygiene of hands, adequate triage in the health facilities, environmental controls, and the rational use of the personal protective equipment in accordance with the local regulations.