

14 May 2015 - The recent increase in the number of people affected by the avian influenza virus H5N1 in Egypt is not related to virus mutations but rather to more people becoming exposed to infected poultry, according to a recent mission of six organizations assessing the H5N1 situation in the country. [\[1\]](#)

From 1 November 2014 to 30 April 2014 Egypt experienced a total of 165 cases and 48 deaths, more than any country has ever experienced in a similar period. There are indications that H5N1 is circulating in all sectors of poultry production and in all parts of Egypt.

A joint mission of WHO/Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)/World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)/US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)/US NAMRU-3 was conducted in Egypt from 8 to 12 March 2015, at the invitation of the Ministry of Health and Population, to assess the public health risk associated with the recent spike of outbreaks in poultry, as well as human cases of avian influenza A (H5N1) in the country.

“The most likely reason for the increase in cases is that more poultry in Egypt are infected by H5N1 and so more people are exposed to this virus,” said Dr Keiji Fukuda, WHO Assistant Director-General for Health Security and head of the H5N1 investigation team in Egypt.

“Coupled with insufficient awareness, behavioural patterns and inadequate precautions taken by humans when interacting with poultry this explains what we are seeing.”

Many small farmers have turned to raising poultry for food and income in an unmonitored and uncontrolled farming sector.

The mission met with his excellency the Prime Minister Mr Ibrahim Mahlab and recommended that Egypt make long-term investments in agriculture, veterinary services, health and rural communities to combat H5N1. Policies should be developed to engage the large number of unlicensed commercial and semi-commercial poultry farms in developing new means of implementing and assuring effective disease prevention and control.

WHO continues to work with the Government to address H5N1. Within 3 months, a 2-year action plan that encompasses these recommendations and includes clear outcomes and indicators for monitoring will be developed by the ministries of health, agriculture and local development, with the support of FAO, WHO and OIE.

Related links

[WHO human-animal interface web page](#)

[World Organisation for Animal Health: avian influenza](#)

[Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: avian influenza](#)

[Cumulative number of confirmed human cases of avian influenza A\(H5N1\) reported to WHO](#)

[Influenza at the human-animal interface, monthly risk assessment summary](#)

[1] World Health Organization; United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization; World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE); United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; US Naval Medical Research Unit 3; UNICEF

Saturday 20th of April 2024 11:23:42 AM