

EDITORIAL

BIRD FLU: AWARENESS IS THE PRIME CONCERN

Flu means a febrile illness with bodyache, rhinorrhoea and cough. As this occur in birds that's why this is called bird flu. Is it a new disease? No it is not a new disease. Only the influenza virus changes its strain as the criminal changes their wearing.

This bird flu in different name was present from the past.

In 1918- it is called "**Spanish Flu**" when there was death of 40-50 million.

In 1957-it is called "**Asian Flu**" when there was death of 1 million.

In 1968-it is called "**Hong Kong Flu**"

now in 1997 it is named as "**Bird flu**".¹

As the fatality rate is extreme so we have to take a through idea regarding bird flu.

As the death rate of bird flu is nearly 100% and as human contamination may occur from apparently healthy birds so all the birds in a particular zone is to be killed. This produces economic pressure on the society and nutritional challenge to the society. Pressure on non poultry protein (Fish and other protein) increases and their cost also increases.

The bird flu is contaminated by the following ways:^{2,3}

- 1) Avian to human:
 - a) Handling of sick or dead poultry.
 - b) Slaughtering, defeathering or preparing sick poultry for cooking.
 - c) Consuming raw or undercooked poultry or poultry products.

Finally cooked eggs or poultry intake is not harmful.

Until February 5, 2008 total number of human cases are 359 and death 226. Median age of patients is approximately 18 years. Case fatality rate is 60%-80%

2) Environment to human:

- a) Visiting a live poultry market.
- b) Ingestion of contaminated water during swimming.
- c) Direct intranasal or conjunctival inoculation during exposure to water.
- d) Contamination of hands from infected fomites and subsequent self- inoculation.

3) Human to human:

So far no case of human to human transmission by small particle aerosols has been identified.

The incubation period of H5N1 may be longer than other known human influenzas. In 1997 most cases within 2-4 days after exposure. Recent reports shows similar intervals (but upto 8 days).

:Initially high fever (>38°F), influenza like illness, lower respiratory tract infection. Sometimes there may be diarrhoea, vomiting, abdominal pain, pleuritic pain, bleeding from nose, gums, encephalitis. It may produce some complications such as multi organ failure, cardiac dilatation, ventilation associated pneumonia, supraventricular tachyarryhmias, pulmonary haemorrhage, pneumothorax, pancytopenia, reye's syndrome and sepsis syndrome.^{1,2,4}

Investigation includes CBC with ESR, CXR P/A view may show diffuse or multifocal or patchy infiltrates, interstitial infiltrates, segmental or lobular consolidation with air bronchograms.

When to suspect: A flu like illness in a patient related with poultry either direct handling or defeathering or moving nearby poultry either poultry farm or poultry market is very suspicious of bird flu.

Taking fried poultry, full boiled egg can not contaminate bird flu. So to take full boiled egg and

fried poultry is a message for public health. Prevention of infection by H5N1 avian influenza virus in a poultry should be very much concern for the prevention of bird flu. But it is a very difficult task. We are looking forward to find out the path of prevention.

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