



**JOINT PRESS RELEASE BETWEEN
THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH
KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA AND
THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)**

Press release 13 January, 2012

Nineteenth Human Case of Avian Influenza H5N1 in Cambodia

The Ministry of Health (MoH) of the Kingdom of Cambodia wishes to advise members of the public that a 2-year-and-7-month-old boy from La Peak Village, Chhnur Mean Chey Commune, Proneth Preah Operational District, Banteay Mean Chey Province has been diagnosed with H5N1 influenza. The patient is currently in critical condition in Angkor Hospital for Children. He became sick on 3rd January, 2012 suffering with fever, cough, runny nose, and vomiting. He was initially treated by local private practitioners. His condition worsened and he was admitted to Angkor Hospital for Children in Siem Reap on 9th January. Clinicians at the hospital suspected avian influenza and sent clinical samples to the laboratory of National Institute for Public Health (NIPH) on 10th. The result was confirmed by the Institute Pasteur du Cambodge on 12th January 2012. The patient was started on Tamiflu. There is evidence of recent deaths among poultry in the village and the patient had contact with sick or dead poultry prior to becoming sick.

The boy is the nineteenth person in Cambodia to become infected with H5N1 virus, and the first person this year. Of all the nineteen cases, 12 were children under 14, and twelve of the nineteen confirmed cases occurred in females.

"Avian influenza H5N1 is still a threat to the health of Cambodians. This is the first case of H5N1 infection in human this year, and children still seem to be most vulnerable. I urge parents and guardians to keep children away from sick or dead poultry, discourage them from playing in areas where poultry stay and wash their hands often. If they have fast or difficulty breathing, they should be brought to medical attention at the nearest health facilities and attending physicians be made aware of any exposure to sick or dead poultry." said HE Mam Bun Heng, Minister of Health.

H5N1 influenza is a flu that normally spreads between sick poultry, but it can sometimes spread from poultry to humans. Human H5N1 Avian Influenza is a very serious disease that requires hospitalization. Although the virus currently does not easily spread among humans, if the virus changes it could easily be spread like seasonal influenza. Hence, early recognition of cases is important.

As in all previous cases, the Ministry of Health's Rapid Response Teams (RRT) have gone to the hospital and the field to identify the boy's close contacts and initiate preventive treatment as required. In addition, a public health education campaign is being conducted in the village to inform families on how to protect themselves from contracting avian influenza. The government's message is - wash hands often; keep children away from poultry; keep poultry away from living areas; do not eat **sick** poultry; and all poultry eaten should be well cooked.

Globally since 2003, there have been 577 laboratory confirmed cases of avian influenza with 340 related deaths.

The Ministry of Health will continue to keep the public informed of developments via the MoH website www.cdcmoh.gov.kh where relevant health education materials can also be downloaded.

For more information on human influenza please call the MoH Influenza Hotline numbers: **115 (free call); 012 488 981 or 089 669 567**

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