



OFFLU Human Animal Interface Technical Activity Summary

Timely sharing of epidemiological and virological data on zoonotic or potentially pandemic strains of influenza in animals is crucial for public health risk assessment. Promoting the collection and analysis of these data is among the mandated activities of both OFFLU and the WHO Global Influenza Programme. Because these activities are benefitted by intersectoral collaboration, OFFLU has established a flexible forum (called the "OFFLU Human Animal Interface Technical Activity") to build on and optimize existing collaboration on relevant influenza issues at the human animal interface.

Objective: To develop both general and specific mechanisms for improving coordination and technical communication about zoonotic/potentially pandemic animal influenza viruses between the animal and public health sectors, and to take steps to bridge cultural gaps between these sectors.

Scope: The scope is limited to aspects of influenza that exist at the human animal interface.

Activities: Proposed initial activities can be assigned into three overlapping categories:

- 1. Improve coordinated assessment of influenza zoonotic/pandemic risks (overall, and in emergencies) and bridge cultural gaps between the animal and human health sectors**
 - a. Optimize integrated analysis of virological/epidemiological/molecular and human/animal sector information.
 - b. Establish a mechanism for real-time information flow in emergency situations (e.g. information on animal viruses circulating in the area of a suspected human cluster).
 - c. Identify (and/or aim to fill gaps in) mechanisms for the timely sharing of epidemiological information.
 - d. Ensure that global references and information necessary for influenza risk assessment are current (e.g. standard phylogenetic trees).
 - e. Formalize intersectoral participation in relevant technical and policy related meetings and discussions.
 - f. Identify areas in need of further collaboration, and initiate relevant activities to address them.
- 2. Promote research at the human animal interface**
 - a. Identify knowledge gaps and prioritize research topics
 - b. Promote filling of knowledge gaps (e.g. through promoting specific research or field activities, and holding technical meetings on relevant issues of mutual interest).
 - c. Identify and promote funding of these activities wherever possible
- 3. Improve linkages among laboratory networks**
 - a. Actively promote the collection and timely sharing of genetic sequence data (including full genome analysis) by and among laboratories of both animal and human networks
 - b. Establish a mechanism by which information on public health-relevant virus mutations is regularly shared between the sectors (e.g. information on mutations of interest is supplied by the PH sector, and information on these mutations in circulating avian viruses is supplied by the AH sector)
 - c. Ensure joint participation in other OFFLU technical activities relating to virological and laboratory network issues

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