

Seqirus Media Monitoring

26th Oct 2018

Seqirus mentions

Doctors promise 'flu vaccine is on its way'

The British Medical Association and the Royal College of GPs have both issued statements seeking to reassure patients that there will be sufficient flu vaccines for all those who need to be immunised this winter. Flud offers far better protection for over 65's . However, because it takes time for the supplier to generate sufficient quantity of this new vaccine, deliveries are taking place in three phases in September, October and November. The chair of the BMA's GP committee, Dr Richard Vautrey, said more will be available within the coming weeks and that patients should book an appointment with their GP practice once new stocks arrive.

<http://www.onmedica.com/NewsArticle.aspx?id=340171f1-97f3-4119-8d5b-f296e866fe38>

MP calls for assurances on flu vaccine

Cumbrian MP Sue Hayman has called on Health Secretary Matt Hancock to explain why elderly patients are struggling to access this year's flu jab. The Workington MP has written to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, asking for reassurances that the NHS is doing everything it can to address the apparent delays. Mrs Hayman spoke to local NHS bosses, who said the over 65s vaccine is different this year and may be arriving later - raising concerns that some may be left unprotected as flu season hits.

<http://www.newsandstar.co.uk/news/17002036.mp-calls-for-assurances-on-flu-vaccine/>

Winter flu vaccine crisis looms after years of Tory budget cuts and selloffs in NHS

An east London GP has warned that elderly people could die this winter because of flu vaccine shortages. Jackie from Tower Hamlets said there was "total chaos" across GP surgeries. Her warning came as the NHS faces a winter crisis and flu variety even worse than last year. GP surgeries have been reporting a shortage of the new seasonal flu vaccines designed for people over 65 years old. "In our surgery we don't have any for over 65s," said Jackie. "I know of GP practices in Hackney and the Lake District where people have turned up to get their vaccines and been told they've run out."

<https://socialistworker.co.uk/art/47403/Winter+flu+vaccine+crisis+looms+after+years+of+Tory+budget+cuts+and+selloffs+in+NHS>

Industry News

FDA approves first new flu drug in almost two decades

Shionogi and Roche won U.S. FDA approval for their flu treatment, the first new flu drug approved by the agency in nearly 20 years. Xofluza was approved to treat acute uncomplicated influenza in patients 12 years of age and older who have had symptoms for no more than two days, the FDA said. "This is the first new antiviral flu treatment with a novel mechanism of action approved by the FDA in nearly 20 years," FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb said. "While there are several FDA-approved antiviral drugs to treat flu, they're not a substitute for yearly vaccination."

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-roche-hldg-fda/fda-approves-first-new-flu-drug-in-almost-two-decades-idUKKCN1MY2JQ>

Additional sources: (Daily Mail) (Stat News) (Scientific American) (Time) (Pharmaphorum) (Finanzen) (News-Medical) (The Pharma Letter) (Infectious Disease Advisor) (Romandie)

Pasadena Company Reports Its Universal Flu Vaccine Has Successfully Completed

Preclinical Trial

A preclinical trial recently completed by InVax was reportedly successful. InVax, which teamed up with Trudeau Institute Contract Research Organization and Hong Kong University, said it has created a flu vaccine that conquers the high mutation right of the flu strain, according to Dr. Arthur Young, company founder and president.

<http://www.pasadenanow.com/main/pasadena-company-reports-its-universal-flu-vaccine-has-successfully-completed-preclinical-trial/>

Abbott Introduces the Next Generation of Influenza A & B and Strep A Assays with Fastest-Ever Time to Molecular Results

Abbott announced today that the U.S. FDA has cleared its next-generation Influenza A & B 2 and Strep A 2 molecular assays for point-of-care testing. These new assays enable the fastest-ever time to molecular influenza A & B and Strep A results at the point of care

<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/abbott-introduces-next-generation-influenza-130000844.html>

Pandemic Influenza News

How Vaccines Help Prevent Another Flu Pandemic

Researchers believe that over 50 million people worldwide died in the 1918 flu pandemic, making it possibly worse than even the Black Death that began in the 14th century. This could occur again unless we protect ourselves better. To do that, we should emphasize high compliance with the flu vaccines that are currently available while we pursue the longer-term goal of a better vaccine.

<http://www.acsh.org/news/2018/10/23/how-vaccines-help-prevent-another-flu-pandemic-13543>

Academic studies

Flu virus could evolve resistance to pandemic drug

The influenza virus can evolve resistance to an anti-flu drug currently in development for use in pandemics, a study has found. Scientists at Imperial College London, in collaboration with Public Health England, have discovered that two genetic mutations would be needed for the virus to develop resistance to favipiravir, an experimental antiviral developed in Japan. Favipiravir is not currently licensed in the UK for the treatment of flu but has shown to be effective in clinical trials to date and has the potential to be used in the event of a flu pandemic where other drugs, such as Tamiflu, might fail.

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/188766/flu-virus-could-evolve-resistance-pandemic/>

Additional sources: ([Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences \(PNAS\)](#)) ([News Medical](#)) ([The Sun](#))

Fighting mutant influenza

Another flu season is here, which means another chance for viruses to mutate. Already, most influenza A viruses contain a mutation that confers resistance against one class of antiviral medications, and the bugs are steadily gaining resistance against another class. Scientists report in ACS Medicinal Chemistry Letters a series of experiments designed to develop new medications that could potentially fight off the resistant and sensitive types of influenza A.

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/10/181024112213.htm>

Additional sources: ([News Medical](#))

Are Asthma Hospitalizations Predictive of Influenza Hospitalizations in NYC Adults?

A significant association between influenza and asthma hospitalizations has been demonstrated at the population level in adult patients in New York City, with the associations varying on the basis of age and geographic locale, according to the results of a longitudinal ecological study that were published in BMJ Open.

<http://www.pulmonologyadvisor.com/influenza/influenza-asthma-hospitalizations-temporal-geographical-associations/article/809955/>

Pediatric influenza news

Fewer than half of expectant mums in Bury are taking up free winter flu jab

In England, a seasonal flu update report to Bury's Health and Wellbeing board found that only 48.8 per cent of expectant mothers chose to take advantage of the vaccination last winter. This was below the expected take-up of 55 per cent and is lagging well behind the national target of a 55 to 75 cent take up, although it did represent a 1.1 per cent increase on the previous season's rate.

<http://www.burytimes.co.uk/news/17006367.fewer-than-half-of-expectant-mums-in-bury-are-taking-up-free-winter-flu-jab/>

AMA encourages people 6 months and older to get vaccinated against influenza

Florida health officials have confirmed the death of an unvaccinated Florida child as the first influenza-related death of the season. The American Medical Association (AMA) is encouraging everyone aged 6 months and older to be vaccinated against the disease, ideally by the end of October.

<https://www.pharmacist.com/article/ama-encourages-people-6-months-and-older-get-vaccinated-against-influenza>

Over 65's influenza news

Elderly Singaporeans could be better protected with twice-yearly flu jabs: Study

Elderly Singaporeans may be better protected against the flu and respiratory illness if they get an influenza jab twice a year, instead of once, a local study has found. Researchers found that with a second vaccination after six months, the proportion of participants with antibody levels high enough to protect against the three influenza strains in the vaccine increased by a fifth, from 56.8 per cent to 80.4 per cent. The May 2016 to November 2017 study by the National Centre for Infectious Diseases and Tan Tock Seng Hospital won Gold in the Singapore Young Investigator Award (Clinical Research) category at the Singapore Health and Biomedical Congress on Oct 25.

<http://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/health/elderly-singaporeans-could-be-better-protected-with-twice-yearly-flu-jabs-study>

General Influenza News

Drop in adult flu vaccinations may be factor in last season's record-breaking deaths, illnesses

Fewer than 4 out of 10 adults in the United States got flu shots last winter, the lowest rate in seven seasons and one likely reason that the 2017-2018 season was the deadliest in decades. Reports released by the CDC provide new details outlining the severity of the past flu season, during which more people were killed by seasonal influenza than in any other since the 1970s. Last season, vaccination coverage among adults was 37.1 percent, a decrease of 6.2 percentage points from the previous season. Ahead of the brunt of this winter's flu season, the FDA approved the first new type of flu drug in two decades

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2018/10/25/drop-adult-flu-vaccinations-may-be-factor-last-seasons-record-breaking-deaths-illnesses/>

Flu vaccination season begins in Switzerland

Every year, Switzerland has a nationwide flu vaccination programme ahead of the winter season. The vaccination programme started on 23 October and will run until 9 November 2018. This year is the first with vaccinations offered simultaneously in doctor's surgeries and pharmacies. On 9 November 2018, national vaccination day, vaccinations are possible without an appointment at a reduced cost, typically CHF 30, substantially lower than the usual price of around CHF 65.

<http://lenews.ch/2018/10/25/flu-vaccination-season-begins-in-switzerland/>

Clinical Commissioning Groups warn of the importance of flu vaccinations before winter

South Cheshire and Vale Royal CCGs are reminding vulnerable residents to get the flu vaccination

before winter. This year a more effective vaccine is being given to those aged 65 and over, which is proven to give better protection against flu for people of this age.

<http://www.knutfordguardian.co.uk/news/17004962.clinical-commissioning-groups-warn-of-the-importance-of-flu-vaccinations-before-winter/>

Good vaccine match, average flu season expected

In the U.S., the medical community is expecting an average flu season this year, said Chief Medical Officer Dr. Peter Henry with Essentia Health in Brainerd. In addition, Henry said this year's vaccine is expected to be a good match.

<http://www.brainerddispatch.com/lifestyle/health/4518965-good-vaccine-match-average-flu-season-expected>

Get a flu shot now - for your benefit and your neighbours'

Considering the severity of last year's flu, it is especially important for everyone over age six months to be vaccinated. Getting the vaccine is not just good for you but also for the larger community. About 70 percent of the population needs to receive the flu vaccine to ensure "herd immunity ." A new, higher-dose vaccine is available for the elderly. If you are 65 or older, ask your doctor about this. About 54 to 70 percent of hospitalizations for flu occur among people 65 and older.

<http://theconversation.com/get-a-flu-shot-now-for-your-benefit-and-your-neighbors-105340>

HSE orders extra supply of flu vaccine amid epidemic concerns

In Ireland, the Health Service Executive has ordered an extra supply of the flu vaccine this year due to raised concerns of an epidemic during the winter months. A HSE spokeswoman told The Irish Times it has purchased up to 1.15 million doses of the vaccine compared to 850,000 doses last year. The HSE urged all healthcare workers and people in at-risk groups to get the flu vaccine, as figures show seasonal flu vaccine uptake rates among staff working in the health services last year were at the highest ever levels.

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/health/hse-orders-extra-supply-of-flu-vaccine-amid-epidemic-concerns-1.3675276>

Health experts urge govt to educate citizens about anti-influenza vaccine

In Pakistan, health experts have urged the government to introduce a proper public health policy to control the spread of seasonal diseases especially influenza which has become a threat to the citizens especially kids in the current weather condition. "The awareness campaigns regarding flu vaccination are necessary and the government must initiate efforts to educate citizens about consequences of influenza virus on their health, and the preventive measures which they can adopt and the remedies and proper medications", said Dr Mubashir

<http://nation.com.pk/25-Oct-2018/health-experts-urge-govt-to-educate-citizens-about-anti-influenza-vaccine>

Govt. issues guidelines on H1N1 to hospitals

To counter the increasing cases of H1N1 infection in the State, the government on Thursday released a set of guidelines to deal with such cases to all government-run and private hospitals in Maharashtra. The guidelines suggest that patients who show signs of H1N1, such as mild fever and cough, and are not responding to other treatments should be put on oseltamivir.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/mumbai/govt-issues-guidelines-on-h1n1-to-hospitals/article25326365.ece>

Flu Season Tips For Protection Against Infection

The 2017-2018 flu season was, unfortunately, one of the worst the United States has ever experienced. When looking at strains, influenza A viruses were highly prevalent last year, particularly H3N2. This virus is said to be the toughest one for vaccines to protect against, leading to more serious cases of the flu. Based on clues from the flu season which is coming to end in the Southern Hemisphere, it appears that that activity is quite low, with H1N1 strains being more common than H3N2. "It's cautiously good news that it might be a milder season than we saw last year — so fingers crossed," says Dr. Lisa Maragakis, senior director of infection prevention at Johns

Hopkins Health System in Baltimore.

<http://www.medicaldaily.com/whether-mild-or-severe-every-flu-season-calls-these-protective-steps-428218>

This year's flu strain could strike more vulnerable Canadians

In Canada, early flu watch indicators suggest many people may have less immunity to this year's potential influenza strain, said Lynora Saxinger, an infectious diseases expert at the University of Alberta. "The 2018-19 flu season is kicking off: in Alberta so far there are 83 cases of influenza, with Calgary currently having the most at 30 cases," she said. "While it's early days, and very hard to predict outcomes, it looks like the dominant strain so far this year is H1N1. This strain was new in 2009 but we haven't seen it much in the last couple of years. Recent H1N1 years have tended to be bad for pregnant women and younger adults," she added.

<http://www.folio.ca/this-years-flu-strain-could-strike-more-vulnerable-canadians/>

Burden of disease

Child dies from flu in New York City, health department urges flu vaccine

New York City reported its first flu-related death of the season, and the health department urged everyone over 6 months of age to get a flu shot. Acting New York City Health Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot did not release details other than to say the victim was a child. She noted that the death happened despite the flu accounting for just 2 percent of all hospital visits in the city.

<https://abc7ny.com/health/child-dies-from-flu-in-nyc-health-department-urges-vaccine/4554174/>

Additional sources: (New York Daily News) (Spectrum News NY1)

Estimated incidence of influenza-associated severe acute respiratory infections in Armenia is low

The estimated incidence of influenza-associated severe acute respiratory infections in Armenia is low now, despite the beginning of the 'influenza' season, Liana Torosyan, the head of a Health Ministry department in charge of prevention of infectious diseases, told a news conference.

http://arka.am/en/news/society/estimated_incidence_of_influenza_associated_severe_acute_respiratory_infections_in_armenia_is_low/

Man dies of influenza in Tacoma hospital

Health officials confirmed the first flu death in Washington this season. The Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department reports a man in his forties tested positive for influenza when he was admitted to the hospital. He spent more than a week in the ICU before he died this week. There were five reports of Pierce County residents hospitalized with influenza whose ages ranged from late teens to late sixties

<https://kgmi.com/news/007700-man-dies-of-influenza-in-tacoma-hospital/>

10 hospitalized in Spokane so far with flu season underway

The flu season has begun in Spokane County and those who have not been vaccinated are at higher risk. "We have had 10 hospitalizations, but none critical so far," says Malia Nogle, an epidemiologist at the Spokane Regional Health District.

<https://www.kxly.com/news/10-hospitalized-in-spokane-so-far-with-flu-season-underway/822906607>

Flu officially arrives in Guelph, no cases yet in Waterloo region

In Canada, the Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health Unit is reporting the first lab-confirmed case of the flu. The case is a person in Guelph. Region of Waterloo Public Health says it has not had any confirmed cases yet in that region. Dr. Nicola Mercer, medical officer of health for the Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health Unit said this first case is a reminder to people to get their flu shots.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/kitchener-waterloo/guelph-flu-season-2018-waterloo-region-1.4876845>

Thirty-five serious flu complications reported this month, highest in years

In Taipei, the Centers for Disease Control said that 35 cases of serious flu complications have been confirmed so far this flu season, which started on Oct. 1, the highest number over the same period for five years, while more than 1.32 million government-funded vaccines were administered in the first week since they have been available.

<http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2018/10/25/2003703004>

Flu Surveillance in Animals

No News Recorded