

Seqirus Media Monitoring

28th Nov 2018

Seqirus mentions

Contractor stuck with Fluad ordered for 2019 despite flu jab changes

In England, a contractor has been unable to change her Fluad order for 2019 despite an announcement the following day that alternative flu vaccines may be available next year. Indira Panchal, owner of Meiklejohn Pharmacy, said that she ordered around £1,500-worth of Fluad for the 2019-20 flu season, following repeated prompting from Seqirus. But the following day she saw NHS England's announcement that it was considering recommending two additional vaccines, and she told the manufacturer that she "didn't want to go through" with her original order. Producing and supplying a seasonal flu vaccine takes about nine months, said Seqirus. It pointed to NHS England's advice last week that pharmacies should not "unnecessarily delay" ordering currently licensed vaccines.

<https://www.chemistanddruggist.co.uk/news/contractor-stuck-fluad-order-despite-vaccine-changes-2019>

Two new flu vaccines may be licensed for use before next winter, says NHS England

Pharmacists may have two further options when vaccinating patients aged over 65 years against flu in 2019/2020, NHS England has advised. Two new vaccines — a cell-grown quadrivalent vaccine (QIVc) and a high-dose trivalent vaccine (TIV-HD) — were found to be "suitable for use" by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation but have yet to be licensed in the UK. Pharmacists will again be asked to administer the quadrivalent inactivated vaccine (QIV) for people aged 18–64 years and the adjuvanted trivalent inactivated vaccine (aTIV) for patients aged over 65 years

<https://www.pharmaceutical-journal.com/news-and-analysis/news/two-new-flu-vaccines-may-be-licensed-for-use-before-next-winter-says-nhs-england/20205801.article>

Industry News

75,000 doses of Sanofi Pasteur flu vaccine from batch containing impurities have been used in Hong Kong

About 75,000 doses of imported flu vaccine belonging to a batch containing impurities have been administered in Hong Kong, the city's health authorities disclosed. The Department of Health said 175,000 doses from a batch containing "white particles" had been delivered to the city's public health care providers from Sanofi Pasteur. All flu vaccination services had therefore been suspended at hospitals and outpatient clinics, but were expected to resume gradually from Saturday.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/2175296/75000-doses-sanofi-pasteur-flu-vaccine-containing>

Additional sources: (RTHK.hk) (7th Space) (Yahoo News Singapore)

Sanofi flu vaccine batches rejected after Taiwanese inspectors find impurities: report

After a manufacturing hiccup led Chinese regulators to temporarily hold off on imports of Sanofi's pediatric vaccine Pentaxim earlier this year, authorities in Taiwan have now returned two batches of flu vaccines made by the global giant. Taiwan imported the flu vaccine batches—which contained more than half a million doses—in October. During an inspection, Taiwan FDA employees found that some doses contained black and white suspended matter, rather than being translucent and colorless.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/sanofi-flu-vaccine-batches-returned-after-taiwanese-inspectors-find-impurities-report>

Additional sources: ([Taipei Times](#))

Flu Treatments: What's New and What's for You

The FDA approved the newest antiviral, baloxavir marboxil (Xofluza), in late October for people 12 and older. The drug is a single-dose oral medication. Like the other flu medicines, it needs to be taken as quickly as possible after the symptoms start. Oseltamivir is also available both as a generic version or the trade name Tamiflu.

<http://www.webmd.com/cold-and-flu/news/20181127/flu-treatments-whats-new-and-whats-for-you>

Altimmune Appoints Vipin K. Garg, Ph.D. as its New President and Chief Executive Officer

Altimmune announced the appointment of Vipin K. Garg, Ph.D. as its President and CEO succeeding Bill Enright, current President and CEO. "Vipin was chosen in a very competitive selection process and we are very excited to have him join Altimmune as President and CEO," said Mitch Sayare, Chairman of the Board of Altimmune. "His extensive experience and success in building, managing, and financing private and public biotech companies makes him an extraordinary fit for Altimmune. We thank Bill for his contributions over the years and wish him well in his future endeavors."

<https://www.apnews.com/190bc33d8b3b9d9afcf3133ab199494c>

Pandemic Influenza News

No News Recorded

Academic studies

Study Predicts Novel Approach to Battling Influenza

Although influenza has been studied for decades, the binding of the virus to host cells and its transmission remain a mystery. A new study, led by Rommie Amaro, a professor of chemistry and biochemistry and director of UC San Diego's National Biomedical Computation Resource, and her colleagues suggest that the proteins may use a 'secret' site to help in the binding and cutting process. A closer look at two glycoproteins on the influenza viral surface, neuraminidase (NA) and hemagglutinin (HA), allow for a better understanding of the fitness, transmissibility, infectivity, and virulence of the virus.

<http://www.newswise.com/articles/uc-san-diego-led-study-predicts-novel-approach-to-battling-influenza>

Could mainstream molecular testing hold the key to unlocking the flu challenge?

New platforms are looking to address some of the key challenges of bringing molecular assays to POC, by minimising the complexity and cost of the platform required to run the assays, removing the requirement for cold storage of the reagents and utilising lateral flow assays as the visualisation method for the assay result. This game-changing development in diagnostics has the potential to transform how patients presenting with suspected flu symptoms are assessed – improving treatment at the point of care and minimising the risk of infection spreading.

<https://www.epmmagazine.com/opinion/could-mainstream-molecular-testing-hold-the-key-to-unlocking/>

Pediatric influenza news

Nurseries urged to publicise flu vaccine

In England, the chief medical officer has written a letter to early years practitioners seeking their help in raising awareness of the childhood flu immunisation programme. In her letter, Professor Dame Sally Davies notified staff that all children aged two and three can get the flu vaccine at their general practice, while children in Reception and Years 1 to 5 will be offered the flu vaccine at school. The letter asks practitioners to help publicise the vaccination programme, which for most children involves a nasal spray rather than an injection.

<https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/nursery-world/news/1166260/nurseries-urged-to-publicise-flu-vaccine>

No advice offered on flu vaccine for teachers

On the Isle of Man, the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture says the Department has not offered advice to front line teaching staff on the flu vaccine. Graham Cregeen said if Public Health recommended such a course of action his department would follow it.

<http://www.manxradio.com/news/isle-of-man-news/no-advice-offered-on-flu-vaccine-for-teachers/>

France: should children between 2 and 10 years old be vaccinated against the flu?

According to Santé Publique France, children under the age of 15 account for 25 to 50% of GP visits for flu symptoms, whereas only 6 to 11% of such visits are from the over 65s. Public Health England in October 2013 released a study showing children should be immunised against the flu to help limit spreading the virus around. A leading French infectious diseases specialist agrees, and calls for making parents aware of the benefits of flu vaccination for their children

<http://www.santemagazine.fr/actualites/grippe-faut-il-vacciner-les-enfants-de-2-a-10-ans-335172>

Over 65's influenza news

No News Recorded

General Influenza News

Influenza: Health experts expect people to get vaccinated

Despite some cases of concern over the availability of flu vaccine due to the strong demand for it, health authorities remain confident that they can reach at-risk health groups and provide flu vaccination cover to those who most need it

<http://www.rtl.de/cms/grippe-gesundheitsexperten-rechnen-mit-mehr-impfwilligen-4257233.html>

Commentary: If vaccination rates rise just 1 percentage point, 807 won't die from flu

The flu vaccination rate in the U.S. hovers around 45 percent. If this could increase to 70 percent – the level required to reach “community” or “herd” immunity and keep an epidemic from propagating – the majority of the deaths, hospitalizations and missed days of work could be avoided. A new study by Cal Poly Pomona economist Corey White has measured these powerful ripple effects of flu vaccination. Using 50-state data from 1994 to 2016, he estimates each percentage point increase in the U.S. vaccination rate would result in 807 fewer deaths

<http://www.dailyrepublic.com/all-dr-news/opinion/state-national-columnists/commentary-if-vaccination-rates-rise-just-1-percentage-point-807-wont-die-from-flu/comment-page-1/>

Point of care tests for influenza and other respiratory viruses

Public Health England has published a document giving "support for hospital trusts considering the introduction of point of care testing (POCT) for influenza and other respiratory viruses during winter 2018 to 2019"

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/point-of-care-tests-for-influenza-and-other-respiratory-viruses>

How anti-vax went viral

France is losing the fight against anti-vaccine campaigners online. France's struggles with the diffusion of anti-vaccine beliefs are symptoms of a broad transformation in how people get, vet, and share information online. For Lucie Guimier — a doctorate in geopolitics who has researched France's anti-vaccine movement — 2009's H1N1 “swine flu” epidemic represented a turning point. “It was the first flu in the era of social media, and it was poorly managed in France,” she said, adding that the cure led to cases of narcolepsy. “This revived fears about vaccines. The internet then helped connect anti-vaccine people, creating an echo chamber, which has allowed for the amplification of a movement that was before dispersed to this or that village.”

<https://www.politico.eu/article/how-anti-vax-went-viral/>

Gal Gadot joins Israeli vaccine campaign amid measles outbreak

Gal Gadot has joined an ongoing campaign in favor of vaccines. On Tuesday, Gadot uploaded a post on Facebook - visible only in Israel - calling on people to stay healthy and seek out immunizations. The country is currently facing a severe measles outbreak, affecting more than 2,000 Israelis. And flu season kicks off, the Health Ministry is also urging all over six months to get a flu shot.

<https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Gal-Gadot-joins-Israeli-vaccine-campaign-amid-measles-outbreak-572950>

Medical Professionals: Fewer flu cases no reason to skip your flu shot

Medical professionals say Wisconsinites are off to a good start with flu season, with low numbers of influenza cases, but it's not a reason to avoid getting the flu shot. Milwaukee Health Services Chief Medical Officer Dr. Aronica Williams said "The way to decrease having to put a bubble around yourself is getting the flu shot." "Think about the one time you might get it and you know obviously people don't necessarily think about the flu causing death, but it can!"

<https://www.tmj4.com/news/local-news/medical-professionals-fewer-flu-cases-no-reason-to-skip-your-flu-shot>

Burden of disease

After Terribly Deadly Flu Season, California Aims To Track Deaths More Closely

This year the California Influenza Surveillance Program is changing how it tracks flu-related deaths. It will base its data on death certificates and count all people whose deaths were classified as flu-related, regardless of age. The department acknowledged that its new system still will likely result in an undercount. So far, the flu is "circulating at low levels" in California, but the percentage of lab-confirmed flu infections are on the rise. Using its new methods, the public health department reports that five Californians have died from the flu since Oct. 1.

<https://californiahealthline.org/news/california-tracking-flu-deaths-seniors/>

Is Calgary the start point of the flu epidemic in Alberta?

For the second season in a row, the flu epidemic in Alberta has barely begun that already there are 1,000 cases in Calgary, which seems a sensitive point for flu transmission. A local ER doctor believes this may be due to an influx of people landing at the city's airport in recent years, possibly already contaminated by the flu. However, last year the number of flu infections eventually levelled up and Calgary was actually average with regard to flu infection numbers in the province

<http://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1138303/vaccin-contamination-hiver-rhume-froid-pic>

Unusual rise in flu cases seen this year in UAE

In the UAE, there has been an 'unusual increase' in the number of flu cases this year even before the onset of winter and a noticeable difference in the symptoms has emerged, too, said doctors. According to Dr Zahra Rajab, a general practitioner at Emirates Hospital Day Surgery in Motor City, there has been a 70 per cent increase in flu cases this year.

<https://www.khaleejtimes.com/news/uae-health/unusual-rise-in-flu-cases-seen-this-year-in-uae>

Paramedics see an increase in flu cases this year

There are signs that the flu season could be worse in North Texas this year. MedStar said it has responded to three times as many possible flu cases this year compared to a year ago. The ambulance service said that between Sept. 1 and Nov. 26, crews treated 226 patients with influenza-like illnesses. That's compared to only 44 patients during the same period a year ago.

<http://www.fox4news.com/news/paramedics-see-an-increase-in-flu-cases-this-year>

2nd pediatric flu death reported in 2018-19 season

In the U.S., the second flu-associated pediatric death of the 2018-19 season was reported in the week ending Nov. 17, according to the CDC's most recent FluView report. The child lived in Florida, according to the state health department.

<https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/quality/2nd-pediatric-flu-death-reported-in-2018-19-season.html>

Three dead as H1N1 spreads in Shivamogga

In India's Shivamogga, the district is reeling under the spread of H1N1 influenza with three infected persons having lost their lives since September 1. District Surveillance Officer B.S. Shankarappa told The Hindu that swab samples of 325 persons show symptoms of H1N1.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/three-dead-as-h1n1-spreads-in-shivamogga/article25607752.ece>

Flu stats start to rise in Central Alberta

So far this flu season 77 Central Albertans tested positive for the flu and 17 people hospitalized. According to the latest statistics from Alberta Health Services (AHS), 75 of those cases were Influenza A and two were Influenza B. Across the province there have been 1,424 lab-confirmed cases and 290 hospitalizations. The only flu-related death so far occurred in Calgary

<https://www.reddeeradvocate.com/news/flu-stats-start-to-rise-in-central-alberta/>

Flu Surveillance in Animals

Naig seeks more money to prep for foreign animal disease outbreak

The Iowa state ag secretary is asking lawmakers for a quarter of a million dollar budget increase, to boost the "Animal Agriculture Industries Bureau" in the Iowa Department of Agriculture. "To prepare, present, detect and, if needed, to respond in the case of a foreign animal disease," Ag Secretary Mike Naig said. Naig said Avian influenza, African swine fever and other foreign animal diseases are a threat to Iowa's livestock and poultry industries.

<http://www.radioiowa.com/2018/11/27/naig-seeks-more-money-to-prep-for-foreign-animal-disease-outbreak/>

Winter warning of bird flu as risk of migratory birds heightens

The UK's Chief Veterinary Officers (CVO) put out a warning following circulation of the H5N8 strain in other parts of the world, suggesting the colder weather was increasing the risk of flu from migrating birds. A joint statement from the UK's CVOs said: "It is critical that all keepers of poultry, including game birds and pet birds, act now to reduce the risk of transmission of avian flu to their flocks."

<https://www.fginsight.com/news/top-stories/winter-warning-of-bird-flu-as-risk-of-migratory-birds-heightens-75248>

Poultry farmers and bird keepers urged to prepare for winter Avian Flu threat

Poultry farmers and pet bird keepers across the UK are urged to prepare for the winter Avian Flu threat through biosecurity measures. Last winter, the H5N6 HPAI strain of bird flu was only detected in wild birds and there were no outbreaks in domestic birds. Although there have been no findings in the UK since June 2018 the virus is still circulating in wild birds in North Europe (including Denmark and Germany) and has caused outbreaks in poultry. In addition, the H5N8 HPAI virus continues to circulate in Eastern Europe

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/poultry-farmers-and-bird-keepers-urged-to-prepare-for-winter-avian-flu-threat>