

# Seqirus Media Monitoring

## 31st Jan 2019

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### Seqirus mentions

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No News Recorded

### Industry News

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No News Recorded

### Pandemic Influenza News

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#### A century after the Spanish flu, preparing for the next pandemic

Dr Kevin McCracken and Professor Peter Curson are health researchers at Macquarie University. They write about the 1918 flu pandemic, and that another pandemic is inevitable and that "public health preparedness for a serious future epidemic is thus essential. A lot of effort has been put into this by federal and state authorities (and international agencies) since the 2005 bird flu scare. They stand us in good stead. At the same time, we can virtually be certain that our health care facilities and medical personnel would again be overwhelmed."

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/a-century-after-the-spanish-flu-preparing-for-the-next-pandemic-20190130-p50uhm.html>

### Academic studies

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#### Flu May Raise Chance of Stroke, Neck Artery Tears

Flu can make you deathly ill, but it could also trigger a stroke or a rupture in your neck arteries, two new studies suggest. The findings prompted an urgent reminder from the researchers: Getting a flu shot will not only protect you against infection but may also reduce your risk for these serious complications. Researchers in the first study found that flu can increase your odds for having a stroke by almost 40 percent -- and that added risk remains for a full year.

<https://www.webmd.com/cold-and-flu/news/20190130/flu-may-raise-chance-of-stroke-neck-artery-tears>

*Additional sources: (U.S. News & World Report) (Doctors Lounge) (Medical Xpress) (Live Science) (News Medical) (The Sun)*

### Pediatric influenza news

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#### Michigan child dies from flu, second this season

A second Michigan child has died from flu complications this season, the state Department of Health and Human Services confirmed Tuesday. News of a second childhood flu death in Michigan comes as influenza activity is on the rise. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services reported that it had elevated the level of flu activity in the state from regional to widespread on Friday.

<https://eu.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2019/01/29/michigan-child-dies-influenza-flu-pediatric-deaths/2711871002/>

*Additional sources: (MLive.com)*

#### Girl, 16, critical with flu, despite vaccine

In Hong Kong, a 16-year-old girl is in a critical condition at Queen Mary Hospital with flu, despite receiving a vaccination ahead of the flu season. The Centre for Health Protection had previously been in good health. She was admitted to hospital on Tuesday and was later confirmed to have

influenza A, complicated by severe pneumonia.

<http://news.rthk.hk/rthk/en/component/k2/1440793-20190130.htm>

### **Child caretakers urged to get flu vaccinations**

In Hong Kong, the Centre for Health Protection is investigating a second case of severe pediatric influenza A this season, involving a two-month-old boy. Microbiologist Dr Ho Pak-leung from the University of Hong Kong said it was the second severe case this season involving young children, and advised that if there are young children aged under six months old in the family, parents and caretakers, including domestic workers should get vaccinations against influenza as soon as possible.

<http://www.atimes.com/article/child-caretakers-urged-to-get-flu-vaccinations/>

### **Baby died of flu post-mortem shows**

In Cyprus, a post-mortem carried out on Wednesday on a 20-month-old baby boy who died in Makarios hospital on Monday revealed the cause of death to be type A flu. Earlier in the month, health authorities urged the public to take precautions as the flu season is now at its peak, with the most common flu this year being the virus type A. The flu season started during the last two weeks of December, some two weeks earlier than usual, and has spread rapidly.

<https://cyprus-mail.com/2019/01/30/baby-died-of-flu-post-mortem-shows/>

### **Wigan nurseries join the fight against flu**

In Wigan, flu vaccines are being given to children at nurseries and play groups in a pilot project to increase take-up rates. Fewer than half of pre-school children in the borough received the nasal spray last year, which can help to protect them against the illness. Health chiefs in the borough have launched a pilot project in Worsley Hall to improve vaccination rates.

<https://www.wigantoday.net/news/health/wigan-nurseries-join-the-fight-against-flu-1-9562942>

### **How to Get Through Flu Season When You're Pregnant**

The flu vaccine is arguably the most important preventative measure you can take to avoid the flu each year, but you may wonder if getting a flu shot while pregnant is safe for your fetus. And it might be hard to find good information. "It's crazy because other doctors in other specialities are afraid of pregnant patients, so misinformation abounds," says Nicole Bullock, DO, FACOOG, an Ob/Gyn and adjunct clinical assistant professor for the University of North Texas' health science center. She's heard from patients that health clinics and urgent care centers turned them away from getting a flu shot because they were pregnant.

<https://www.instyle.com/beauty/health-fitness/flu-during-pregnancy-vaccine>

### **Flu epidemic impacting multiple Tennessee Valley school districts**

Several school districts in the Tennessee Valley have canceled school this week because so many kids are sick with the flu. Dr. Ali Hassoun at Huntsville Hospital explains why getting a flu shot is a good idea for everyone, even though it isn't 100% efficient

<http://www.waff.com/2019/01/29/flu-epidemic-impacting-tennessee-valley-school-districts/>

### **Over 65's influenza news**

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#### **2 Island seniors die of flu, 54 hospitalized**

In Canada, P.E.I.'s Chief Public Health Officer Dr. Heather Morrison says two Island seniors have died from flu. For comparison purposes, last year P.E.I. saw a total of six deaths and 319 lab-confirmed cases of flu. In 2017, five people died. Young people are being affected more by H1N1 than other demographics, Morrison said, and the flu vaccine this year is about 70 per cent effective according to a mid-season study.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-flu-deaths-morrison-1.4999164>

### **General Influenza News**

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### **Flu cases starting to rise as hospitals struggle with staff shortages**

Flu cases are on the rise, but hospitals in Northumberland and North Tyneside so far continue to fare much better than last winter. As of last week, 64 per cent of staff at Northumbria Healthcare had received flu vaccinations. Executive medical director, Dr Jeremy Rushmer, said: "This is a considerable improvement on last year, but puts us in a disappointing result compared to our regional colleagues." Vaccination will continue until the end of February in line with national guidance and Dr Rushmer highlighted that we are currently 'right in the middle of flu season with a number of cases and several who are very seriously ill'.

<https://www.chroniclive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/flu-cases-starting-rise-hospitals-15749222>

### **Swine Flu in Delhi: From symptoms to treatment, all you need to know about the H1N1 virus**

As per a data released by the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, 173 people from Delhi were tested positive for Swine flu in the last six days of January 2019. Advice is given with regard to symptoms and treatment including antivirals and the possibility of getting a flu vaccine to avoid catching the virus in the first place

<https://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/swine-flu-in-delhi-from-symptoms-to-treatment-all-you-need-to-know-about-the-h1n1-virus/1459219/>

### **PIMS vaccinates staff exposed to seasonal flu**

Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) has vaccinated almost all its staff exposed to seasonal flu patients against flu after a suspected patient of the infection died there last week.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/425381-pims-vaccinates-staff-exposed-to-seasonal-flu>

### **Extra funding to help public hospitals in flu battle**

In Hong Kong, the government will allocate extra funding to the Hospital Authority to help place the agency in a better position to hire more people and reward overworked staff in the city's public hospitals which have seen a surge in flu patients this winter. The reserve of HK\$500 was clearly a response to the mounting dissatisfaction in the past few weeks from doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals in public hospitals and their heavy workload resulting from serious shortage of manpower.

<http://www.ejinsight.com/20190130-extra-funding-to-help-public-hospitals-in-flu-battle/>

### **Thousands of hospital workers have not been vaccinated against the flu**

In England, across the Black Country and Staffordshire more than 7,500 doctors, nurses and other front-line staff have not been vaccinated. A total of 857 have refused to get the jab. The uptake rate for staff at health trusts across the two counties getting the jab is 72 per cent, higher than the national average of 66 per cent. NHS England has urged healthcare workers to get vaccinated to protect themselves and their patients, pushing for "near universal" coverage.

<https://www.expressandstar.com/news/health/2019/01/30/thousands-of-hospital-workers-have-not-been-vaccinated-against-the-flu/>

### **Still time to receive flu jab after cold snap outbreak**

Residents are being urged that there is still time to get protected against winter bugs such as norovirus and the flu during Merseyside's first cold snap. Statistics show that over the last week flu continues to circulate across the UK with early signs that it is beginning to peak. Health bosses in Cheshire and Merseyside are advising the public that there is still time to get the flu vaccine and are urging anyone who is eligible to make sure they get it sooner rather than later.

<https://www.wirralglobe.co.uk/news/17395544.still-time-to-receive-flu-jab-after-cold-snap-outbreak/>

### **Flu season is here but there is still time get a job (sic)**

It is not too late to vaccinate say Bolton's leading doctors. Public Health England has confirmed flu in

on the increase, leading to GP visits and hospital admissions. Dr Wirin Bhatiani, Bolton Clinical Commissioning Group's chairman, said: "I cannot stress enough the importance of protection. The flu vaccine is the best protection there is against the virus and it does not give you flu, contrary to some people's perception!"

<https://www.theboltonnews.co.uk/news/17394901.flu-season-is-here-but-there-is-still-time-get-a-job/>

### **It's not too late to vaccinate**

Bolton's NHS services are bracing themselves for the flu season but say 'it's not too late to vaccinate'. Reports from Public Health England confirm that flu is now on the increase leading to GP visits and admissions to hospitals across the country albeit slightly later than last year's surge in November and December.

<https://www.horwichadvertiser.co.uk/news-article/4618/It-s-not-too-late-to-vaccinate>

### **How the 2018-19 Flu Shots Help Protect the Public**

The 2018-2019 flu season has been off to a slow start, but that doesn't mean patients should skip getting a flu shot or that pharmacists can skimp on recommending them. "Flu activity has been low so far this year, but we expect activity will pick up soon and peak between December and February," said Alicia Budd, MPH, an epidemiologist in the Influenza Division of the CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases.

<http://www.drugtopics.com/influenza/how-2018-19-flu-shots-help-protect-public>

### **France - How is the flu vaccine made?**

In France, scientists prepare the flu vaccine each season at the Institut Pasteur. There is a national reference centre where samples are sent daily and studied in order to determine which strains are present and whether they have mutated.

[https://www.francetvinfo.fr/sante/maladie/grippe/grippe-comment-fabrique-t-on-le-vaccin\\_3167475.html](https://www.francetvinfo.fr/sante/maladie/grippe/grippe-comment-fabrique-t-on-le-vaccin_3167475.html)

### **What to Know About Super Bowl's Effects on Investments and Influenza**

In the U.S., as the Super Bowl approaches, a 2016 study looked into its link with the flu. Among the key findings were that there were no changes in influenza mortality for host cities of the Super Bowl. However, "a local team making it to the Super Bowl increases influenza mortality in the participating county." Counties that sent a team to the super bowl reported an additional seven reported influenza deaths per million among people aged 65 and older — an 18 percent increase compared to the average.

<https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2019/01/30/516025.htm>

## **Burden of disease**

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### **Mississippi and Alabama See Flu Activity Gains**

The Walgreens Flu Index is a weekly report in the U.S. developed to provide state- and market-specific information regarding flu activity, and ranks those states and markets experiencing the highest incidences of influenza across the country. The latest report has been published and shows Nebraska, Kentucky and Mississippi as worse affected

[https://www.bizjournals.com/birmingham/businesswire/press\\_releases/Alabama/2019/01/30/20190130005107](https://www.bizjournals.com/birmingham/businesswire/press_releases/Alabama/2019/01/30/20190130005107)

### **Flu epidemic that killed 12 hits Andalusia but peak will be less than previous years**

The flu epidemic that is spreading through Spain has now made its way to Andalusia. The highest peak is expected in mid-February, with the rate in Malaga now 211 per 100,000. Although the influenza death toll in Spain has already reached 12, the flu outbreak this year has been delayed by better weather. The vaccination campaign has ended, but the Public Health Service still recommend that high-risk groups like the over-64s are vaccinated.

<http://www.theolivepress.es/spain-news/2019/01/30/flu-epidemic-that-killed-12-hits-andalusia-but-peak-will-be-less-than-previous-years/>

### **Romania reports 54 deaths of influenza**

The death toll of influenza has risen to 54 in Romania, as the National Center for Communicable Disease Surveillance and Control reported six more victims. The last six deaths were patients with influenza A virus, who hadn't had any vaccine against the flu and all six had pre-existing medical conditions.

<https://menafn.com/1098044793/Romania-reports-54-deaths-of-influenza>

### **Ukraine- Epidemic threshold for influenza and ARVI exceeded in 8 regions**

The epidemic threshold for influenza and ARVI has been exceeded in eight regions of Ukraine, the highest sickness rate was recorded in Chernihiv region, according to the Health Ministry's press service. Also, the Health Ministry noted about a rise in sickness rate among children. 'Over the reporting week, 198,708 people fell ill with influenza and ARVI, of whom 58.5% were children under the age of 17. Compared to the previous week, the sickness rate among adults decreased by 6.9%, and grew by 12.5% among children under the age of 17, the ministry reported.

<https://menafn.com/1098046251/UkraineEpidemic-threshold-for-influenza-and-ARVI-exceeded-in-8-regions-Health-Ministry>

### **12 die of swine flu in Delhi hospitals; Health Ministry says no deaths in city**

Over 600 people have tested positive for swine flu in Delhi, while two city-based government-run hospitals have reported 12 deaths due to the H1N1 virus till Tuesday. As of January 29, at least 617 people have been diagnosed with swine flu in Delhi, the third highest number after Rajasthan and Gujarat. No death has been reported due to the infection in the national capital so far, according to the health ministry data.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/12-die-of-swine-flu-in-delhi-hospitals-health-ministry-says-no-deaths-in-city/1459659/>

### **Flu cases picking up momentum in January**

As expected, cases of the flu increased in January. The CDC reports Influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, influenza A(H3N2), and influenza B viruses continue to co-circulate. The percentage of specimens testing positive for flu viruses in the nation's clinical labs rose for the week ending January 19. So far, the CDC says influenza A viruses have made the most people sick since the beginning of the flu season in October.

<https://www.consumeraffairs.com/news/flu-cases-picking-up-momentum-in-january-013019.html>

### **Swine flu transmission surges, scientists rule out virus mutation**

Swine flu transmission is on the surge in Pune, India, with four persons testing positive for the contagion on Tuesday. "The rise in the virus transmission in some parts of the county, including Pune, can be attributed to the seasonality and the unpredictable nature of influenza viruses, including swine flu. The virus is susceptible to oseltamivir and has not been mutated. People should exercise precautions and maintain a healthy lifestyle to ward off the infection," NIV senior scientist Mandeep Chadha told TOI.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/pune/swine-flu-transmission-surges-scientists-rule-out-virus-mutation/articleshow/67746930.cms>

### **The flu has killed 26 people this season in Pa. and it's hitting the Lehigh Valley hard**

Flu activity is on a slight uptick across Pennsylvania with confirmed cases of the flu in all 67 counties, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Health's weekly report tracking the number of confirmed flu cases -- meaning a positive lab test reported to the state -- in every county of Pennsylvania for the week ending Jan. 26.

<https://www.lehighvalleylive.com/bethlehem/2019/01/the-flu-has-killed-26-people-this-season-in-pa-and-its-hitting-the-lehigh-valley-hard.html>

### **N.J. among states getting hit hardest by flu this season. So when will it end?**

While it hasn't been a record-breaking season like last year (at least not yet), New Jersey is still among a handful of states getting hit the hardest by the flu in the country, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) flu surveillance map. There was a slight dip in flu activity earlier this month, offering a glimmer of hope that the flu might be on the decline. However, New Jersey epidemiologist Dr. Tina Tan said that the reverse is likely true.

<https://www.nj.com/expo/news/g66l-2019/01/1c63c356075187/nj-among-states-getting-hit-hardest-by-flu-this-season-so-when-will-it-end.html>

### **How Does the 2018-2019 Flu Season Compare to Last Year's Deadly Season?**

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control are warning that this year's flu season is just beginning to ramp up, but hospitalization and death rates still remain well below last year's deadly averages. However, the CDC did confirm that a total of 22 flu-related pediatric deaths have been reported this season. Earlier this month, the CDC announced that the flu season was starting to ramp up and was widespread in 24 states. Hospitalization rates also went up, particularly for children aged 0 to 4, though they still remain comparatively low compared to last year's season

<https://people.com/health/2019-flu-season/>

### **Flu is Now Widespread in Texas**

For the first time in the 2018-2019 flu season, the flu virus is considered widespread in Texas. Children's Medical Center Dallas reported 253 positive flu cases in last week's monitoring period, which ended Saturday. That's up from 163 cases from the previous week. It marks an increase of 90 cases in a week.

<https://www.nbcdfw.com/news/health/Flu-is-Now-Widespread-in-Texas-505103032.html>

### **Flu Hospitalizations In Colorado Drastically Lower Than 2018**

Flu numbers in Colorado are lower than they were this time in 2018, according to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. The number of people hospitalized from the flu in our state continues to fall from its height in late December. As of Saturday, 1,548 people were sent to the hospital compared to more than 2,800 last year.

<https://denver.cbslocal.com/2019/01/30/flu-hospitalizations-colorado-2018/>

### **Switzerland: flu virus circulating widely**

Flu cases in Switzerland are increasing throughout the country, and affect mainly children up to 4 years old. The flu reached epidemic levels around mid-January.

<https://www.tdg.ch/suisse/La-grippe-est-largement-repandue/story/10976185>

### **France: flu epidemic now spread throughout the country**

In France, the flu epidemic is now in every region, according to the latest update from health agency Santé Publique France. Severe flu is affecting mostly the over 75s and the under 5s, who are the most likely to have to go to hospital as a result. Since 1st November, 33 deaths of hospital patients have been linked to the flu.

<https://www.20minutes.fr/sante/2439899-20190130-grippe-epidemie-touche-desormais-toutes-regions-francaises>

*Additional sources: ([Le Figaro](#)) ([L'Express](#))*

### **Swine flu outbreak kills 76 in India's desert state of Rajasthan**

A swine flu outbreak in one of India's biggest tourist hubs, Rajasthan state in the west of the country, has killed 76 people this year, government officials said on Wednesday. Colder weather has worsened the seasonal outbreak of the H1N1 virus, with Rajasthan recording more than a third of all swine flu deaths in India, officials said.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-india-health-swine-flu/swine-flu-outbreak-kills-76-in-indias-desert-state-of-rajasthan-idUKKCN1PO1G9>

Additional sources: ([Express.co.uk](http://Express.co.uk)) ([Physicians Weekly](http://Physicians Weekly))

### **Romania declares flu epidemic**

Romanian Health Minister Sorina Pintea declared on Wednesday a nationwide influenza epidemic. As of Tuesday, 54 people had died from flu-related complications in the country, an increase of one and a half times in ten days. The vaccination rate in Romania is only 8 percent, which places the country third from last among the European states after Estonia and Latvia. The vaccination rate is the highest in Britain, at 71 percent. The health minister said those people who died from the flu in the current season had "one thing in common: they were not vaccinated."

[http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-01/30/c\\_137787475.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-01/30/c_137787475.htm)

Additional sources: ([Romania-Insider.com](http://Romania-Insider.com))

### **Flu Surveillance in Animals**

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#### **Warning that SA is still at risk for bird flu in 2018**

After being devastated by highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N8) - or bird flu - outbreaks in 2017, South Africa's poultry industry, which includes domestic fowl such as chicken, geese and ducks, could face another wave of outbreaks in winter 2018, warn industry officials.

<https://www.fin24.com/Companies/Agribusiness/warning-that-sa-is-still-at-risk-for-bird-flu-in-2018-20180128-2>