

# Seqirus Media Monitoring

## 24th Apr 2019

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### Seqirus mentions

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#### Seqirus makes plans to transition to cell-based flu vaccine

Seqirus announced plans to manufacture its influenza vaccine for the 2019-2020 season using an exclusively cell-based production process for the first time. Russell Basser, senior vice president of research and development at Seqirus, told *Infectious Diseases in Children* that several studies have demonstrated the potential benefits of cell-based influenza vaccines compared with egg-based vaccines.

<https://www.healio.com/pediatrics/influenza/news/online/%7Bb9d76072-7cde-4684-af06-d032590007a7%7D/seqirus-makes-plans-to-transition-to-cell-based-flu-vaccine>

### Industry News

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#### Vaccine shortages: Everyday life in pharmacies

In the past year alone in Germany, manufacturers reported supply bottlenecks for 45 different vaccines, as data from the Paul Ehrlich Institute (PEI) shows. The German Federal Agency for Vaccines and Medicinal Products has been conducting statistics since autumn 2015 - excluding influenza vaccinations. In the past year, pharmacies sold about 36.4 million vaccine doses on statutory health insurance - about 3 percent more than in the previous year, as figures from the German Drug Testing Institute show. The costs rose from around 1.2 to around 1.3 billion euros. The largest increases were in TBE, influenza and meningococcal vaccines.

<https://www.pharmazeutische-zeitung.de/alltag-in-apotheken/>

Additional sources: (*Neue Westfälische*)

#### Spain - CV adapts its requirements for flu vaccines to prioritise cell-based vaccines

In Spain, Comunidad Valenciana region has published its requirements for flu vaccine lots for the next flu season. It includes a new lot for egg-based and cell-based flu vaccines, with extra details pertaining to cell-based vaccines, and an increased price compared to last season

<https://www.diariofarma.com/2019/04/23/cv-adapta-los-pliegos-para-priorizar-las-vacunas-de-gripe-de-cultivo-celular>

### Pandemic Influenza News

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#### No News Recorded

### Academic studies

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#### Eating elderberries can help minimize influenza symptoms

A recent study by researchers at the University of Sydney has determined exactly how a popular ancient remedy, the elderberry fruit, can help the fight against influenza. Conducted by Professor Fariba Deghani, Dr Golnoosh Torabian and Dr Peter Valtchev as part of the ARC Training Centre for the Australian Food Processing Industry that was established within the university's Faculty of Engineering and IT, the study showed that compounds from elderberries can directly inhibit the virus's entry and replication in human cells, and can help strengthen a person's immune response to the virus.

[https://www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2019-04/uos-eec042319.php](https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2019-04/uos-eec042319.php)

Additional sources: (*Science Daily*) (*Medical Xpress*)

### **\$12 million grant renewal for flu vaccine research**

The National Institutes of Health has awarded the Stanford Institute for Immunity, Transplantation and Infection a five-year, \$12 million renewal of a grant for the study of how people respond to influenza vaccination. With the renewal, the total amount granted for this project has exceeded \$50 million since the first award was made in 2003.

<https://news.stanford.edu/thedish/2019/04/19/12-million-grant-renewal-for-flu-vaccine-research/>

### **'Significant' proportion of health care workers, patients shed flu virus before symptoms appear**

Researchers tracking influenza transmission at a tertiary care hospital in Switzerland found that a "significant" proportion of patients and health care workers shed influenza virus before the appearance of symptoms. The researchers said they found several influenza transmission clusters undetected by routine surveillance, and seven overall clusters of potential transmission among health care workers, including one that appeared to include transmission from an asymptomatic health care worker to an inpatient. The findings were presented at the European Congress of Clinical Microbiology & Infectious Diseases.

<https://www.healio.com/infectious-disease/influenza/news/online/%7Bdeec8a4c-beb0-4abb-9e57-b5af7898d103%7D/significant-proportion-of-health-care-workers-patients-shed-flu-virus-before-symptoms-appear>

### **Biomedical Researchers Explore New Approaches to Flu, Cancer, and Cell Division**

As this year's flu season continues, 2016 Pew scholar Trevor Bedford is tracking the disease's spread around Seattle. With help from a team of researchers from the University of Washington, the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center, and the Brotman Baty Institute for Precision Medicine, the Seattle Flu Study aims to take a closer look at how the disease emerges and spreads through a community by gathering up to 10,000 samples from people experiencing flu symptoms before they visit a doctor. At kiosks placed throughout Seattle in places such as child care and senior centers, researchers collect nose swabs to identify circulating flu strains.

<https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2019/04/23/biomedical-researchers-explore-new-approaches-to-flu-cancer-and-cell-division>

### **Pediatric influenza news**

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#### **Parents reassured febrile seizures following vaccination not dangerous**

University of Sydney research finds that febrile seizures after vaccination are rare, not serious and are no different to febrile seizures due to other causes, such as from a virus. While each Australian child would have received 13 vaccinations by the time they reach two years of age, febrile seizures following vaccination accounted only for 6 per cent of all first febrile seizure presentations to hospital. Published today in Paediatrics, this is the first prospective study to directly compare the differences in severity and outcomes between febrile seizures following vaccination to other febrile seizures.

<https://sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2019/04/24/parents-reassured-vaccination-febrile-seizures-not-dangerous.html>

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

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#### **France - Vaccination: it's good for older people too**

A number of vaccines have been made compulsory for children in France, but older people should also keep their shots up-to-date. Over the age of 65, some vaccines are recommended, such as a yearly flu shot, which is free for this category of at-risk group. However, only 47% of the over 65s got vaccinated against the flu in the 2018-2019 season

<http://www.agevillage.com/actualite-17614-1-vaccination-pour-les-seniors-aussi.html>

### **General Influenza News**

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### **Chemist Warehouse vaccinates Health Minister**

In Australia, Health Minister Greg Hunt turned to community pharmacy, not doctors, for his flu vaccination this year. Amid a 2019 flu season which is gathering early steam, Mr Hunt took the opportunity to have his flu vaccine at Chemist Warehouse Mornington in mid-April, administered by trained pharmacist immuniser Dmytri Nikolayev. "Clinical experts have advised that optimal protection against influenza occurs within the first three to four months following vaccination," said Mr Hunt at the time.

<https://ajp.com.au/news/chemist-warehouse-vaccinates-health-minister/>

### **Who gets to skip vaccines? California plan would put the state - not doctors - in charge**

Dr. Richard Pan has fought the vaccine fight before. First, as a pediatrician in Philadelphia during a deadly measles outbreak. Then, four years ago, as a doctor-turned-lawmaker who battled death threats and a coalition of parents enraged over Pan's 2015 legislation. The proposal — Senate Bill 277 — cut the personal belief exemption from a list of approved reasons not to immunize a child. Now Pan is taking his defense of California's vaccination system a step further with a measure that would put the decision to grant any exemptions in the hands of a state public health official.

<https://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article229557344.html>

### **The U.S. Is Seeing the Longest Flu Season in a Decade—Here's What You Need to Know**

Even though it's spring, you shouldn't stop worrying about the flu, according to a new CDC report. The report states that the current flu season has lasted 21 weeks. It's the longest we've seen in a decade, according to the Associated Press. Two experts explain what you should know about the seemingly never-ending flu season, which you might have thought was over and done. It is still worth getting vaccinated, if you can get hold of the vaccine as it may be running out

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/u-seeing-longest-flu-season-165120361.html>

### **Why vaccines are not just for children**

#VaccinesWork. This is the theme chosen by the World Health Organization for the 2019 World Immunization Week (24-30 April). The WHO estimates that, across the world, 20 million children are still unvaccinated or under-vaccinated. At a time when "healthy ageing" is becoming a top priority for governments across the world, vaccination remains an underused strategy, even though it is known that our immune function declines with age, making us more susceptible to disease. The most striking illustration of this is influenza.

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/04/vaccines-work-vaccinations-healthcare-medicine-world-immunization-week-health-organization/>

### **How to protect your family during longest flu season in recent memory**

The CDC says this flu season is now the longest in decades. While it may be the longest, local experts say it's not nearly as bad as they've seen in recent years, but it's not over yet. In Wisconsin, Nurse epidemiologist Ellen Smith at St. Mary's Hospital tells News 3 Now it's one of the oddest flu seasons she's seen in Madison over the years. While flu cases are declining, Smith says the virus can still spread even in the warmer weather. That's part of the reason why she still encourages you to get the flu shot if you haven't already done so.

<https://www.channel3000.com/news/how-to-protect-your-family-during-longest-flu-season-in-recent-memory/1071602804>

### **How the flu vaccine fails**

Every year, CDC scientists engineer a new flu virus. Andrew Pekosz, PhD, is a researcher at Johns Hopkins who examines why we fail to predict strains to target with vaccines. In particular, he examines years when the vaccine was ineffective and the viruses that were most prevalent to identify properties of these strains. With the speed at which the flu virus evolves, and the fact that numerous strains can be active in any given flu season, engineering an effective vaccine is

daunting. Pekosz's findings on how these vaccines have previously failed will likely prove invaluable at combating such a persistent and common public health concern.

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-04-flu-vaccine.html>

### **As calls for measles vaccination rise, it's crickets from the White House**

Barack Obama was photographed getting immunized against H1N1, the flu virus that triggered the 2009 pandemic. Gerald Ford famously got vaccinated in the 1976 "swine flu" pandemic scare. Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton created and expanded programs to immunize children against childhood diseases. White House photographers recorded Ronald Reagan getting multiple flu shots. But as health departments in multiple states battle some of the largest measles outbreaks in decades, there has been radio silence from the current commander in chief. It's unclear how much Trump has been pressed on the issue by others in his administration.

<https://www.statnews.com/2019/04/23/measles-vaccination-calls-rise-crickets-from-white-house/>

## **Burden of disease**

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### **The 2019 flu season is the longest in a decade, CDC says**

There have been 21 straight weeks of elevated flu season in the U.S., making the current 2018-2019 flu season the longest in ten years. According to the CDC, the previous record-high was twenty weeks during the 2014-2015 season. CNN reports that as many as 57,300 people are estimated to have died from flu-related illness. This number includes 91 children, the CDC said. Five of those pediatric deaths were reported in the latest update.

<http://www.wistv.com/2019/04/23/flu-season-is-longest-decade-cdc-says/>

*Additional sources: (CBS Philly) (CBS New York) (People)*

### **Two-wave U.S. flu season is now the longest in a decade**

Three months ago, this flu season was shaping up to be short and mild in the U.S. But a surprising second viral wave has made it the longest in 10 years. This flu season has been officially going for 21 weeks. That makes it among the longest seen since the government started tracking flu season duration more than 20 years ago. Some experts likened the unusual double waves to having two different flu seasons compressed, back-to-back, into one.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/two-wave-us-flu-season-now-longest-decade-n996461>

*Additional sources: (U.S. News & World Report)*

### **Report: 19 now dead from flu in Monroe County**

New data shows a total of 19 people have died from influenza in the 2018-2019 flu season in Monroe County, N.Y. All of the people who have died are adults, according to the Monroe County Department of Health. The two additional deaths in the week since the previous report was released on April 6.

<https://foxrochester.com/news/local/report-19-now-dead-from-flu-in-monroe-county>

### **Flu levels in Wigan higher than England average**

Levels of flu increased in Wigan earlier this month, GP records show. It put the illness at a level higher than the average across England. Weekly data from Public Health England shows that GPs in Wigan reported seeing five patients with flu-like symptoms between April 8 and 14.

<https://www.wigantoday.net/health/flu-levels-in-wigan-higher-than-england-average-1-9727844>

### **Skyrocketing flu numbers have already passed the 2018 total**

Influenza numbers continue to soar, putting South Australia on a steep trajectory for potentially its worst year on record. Latest figures from SA Health show that up to April 18 there had been 7,414 confirmed cases of the flu, even as the warm weather lingers well into autumn, which is already more than the total of 5,928 cases for all of last year. Free flu vaccinations for children under five have been brought forward and free shots for people over 65 are being distributed as health officials move to deal with the challenge.

<https://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/south-australia/skyrocketing-flu-numbers-have-already-passed-the-2018-total/news-story/f30c22cdf0f18b63af69d0a60982ec8a>

### **Trending to a Mild Flu Season in Southern Minnesota**

It's looking more and more like we're coming to the end of a fairly mild flu season in Minnesota. The latest reported figures show flu-related hospitalizations dropping from 140 to 62. There were also 9 school outbreaks and no outbreaks in Minnesota nursing homes. It's trending even lower in Southeastern Minnesota as had just 5% of the hospitalizations in the last reporting period and just 10% of them for the flu season.

<https://krforadio.com/trending-to-a-mild-flu-season-in-southern-minnesota/>

### **Flu Surveillance in Animals**

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#### **Birdflu in Phuentsholing contained**

Bird flu (H5N1) outbreak in Phuentsholing in Bhutan has been fully contained. The rapid response team is currently conducting active surveillance and border vigilance. The outbreak was confirmed on April 8 at Dhamdara, a village at the outskirts of Phuentsholing proper. No human contact was reported.

<http://www.kuenselonline.com/birdflu-in-phuentsholing-contained/>