

## Seqirus Media Monitoring

### 13th May 2019

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#### Seqirus mentions

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##### **State mulls new drugs to fight swine flu**

In India's Pune, the rise in the number of swine flu deaths has prompted the state government to approach the Union government to procure novel anti-viral drugs 'Peramivir' and 'Baloxavir' to reduce the casualty count. Currently, oseltamivir, popularly known as Tamiflu or Fluvir, is the only drug of choice to treat the infection. The state government's technical committee has advised the use of the new drugs for patients who are battling virus-induced complications and not responding to oseltamivir.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/pune/state-mulls-new-drugs-to-fight-swine-flu/articleshow/69274937.cms>

##### **Australia : Access to measles vaccines through the National Immunisation Program**

Australia's Department of Health has reassured the public there is a sufficient supply of measles vaccine to meet ongoing demand and that supplies under the National Immunisation Program are secured. While one pharmaceutical supplier (GlaxoSmithKline) has advised of a shortage of MMR and MMRV vaccines, the department has confirmed vaccines remain available through another supplier (Seqirus Australia Pty Ltd)

<https://www.marketwatch.com/press-release/australia-access-to-measles-vaccines-through-the-national-immunisation-program-2019-05-10>

##### **Global measles vaccine shortage causes concern locally**

There are concerns of a measles vaccination shortage after one of two major suppliers logged their supply levels as critical with Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration. GlaxoSmithKline added their MMR vaccine Priorix and their MMR and Varicella vaccine Priorix Tetra to the TGA's critical shortage list. The other major supplier in Australia, Seqirus, confirmed that they are also required to report any critical shortages to TGA. While they wouldn't disclose the volume of vaccines they supply in Australia, they did confirm they are also carefully monitoring vaccine stock levels due to an influx in demand.

<https://www.9news.com.au/health/measles-vaccine-shortage-concerns-over-priorix-shortage-glaxoklinesmith/ba1ab525-3a96-4910-8e54-a517ed7ad226>

#### Industry News

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##### **Moderna Announces Publication of Phase 1 Data for mRNA Vaccines Against Two Potential Pandemic Influenza Strains**

Moderna announced the publication of results from two Phase 1 clinical studies showing that mRNA vaccines against H10N8 and H7N9 influenza viruses were well-tolerated and elicited robust immune responses. The results support the potential of mRNA-based vaccines to quickly and effectively address pandemic influenza strains. Mike Watson, senior vice president of vaccine partnerships and health impact at Moderna and a study co-author, said: "These Phase 1 data highlight the potential of Moderna's mRNA platform to demonstrate similar or better immunogenicity than existing vaccines, which can be rapidly produced in a multi-use facility."

<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20190510005216/en/>

Additional sources: ([Seeking Alpha](#)) ([Associated Press](#)) ([Precision Vaccinations](#)) ([Pharmalife.com](#)) ([BioSpace](#)) ([BioPortfolio](#))

## **Cocrystal Pharma Reports First Quarter 2019 Financial Results and Provides Corporate Update**

Cocrystal Pharma, a clinical stage biotech discovering and developing novel antiviral therapeutics, announced its financial results for the quarter ended March 31, 2019. It recently signed an exclusive license and collaboration agreement with Merck Sharp & Dohme to discover and develop certain proprietary influenza A/B antiviral agents and received a \$4 million upfront license fee. Merck will fund all research and development for the program, including clinical development, and will be responsible for worldwide commercialization of any products derived from the collaboration.

<https://www.nasdaq.com/press-release/cocrystal-pharmareports-first-quarter-2019-financial-results-and-provides-corporate-update-20190510-00414>

## **Pandemic Influenza News**

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### **Authorities to send more specimens abroad to test for bird flu virus**

In Nepal, the Epidemiology and Disease Control Division says it is preparing to send specimens collected from the people who came in close contact with the person who died after contracting the H5N1 virus on March 29.

<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2019-05-11/authorities-to-send-more-specimens-abroad-to-test-for-bird-flu-virus.html>

### **Plague and zoonotic influenza warning: CDC names eight diseases which could spark pandemic**

Rabies, plague, SARS and zoonotic influenza all have the potential to develop into global pandemics, a US-based expert in infectious diseases has warned. Dr Behravesh said zoonotic influenza had been ranked top of the list, a reflection of its pandemic potential. The CDC, US Department of the Interior (DOI), and US Department of Agriculture (USDA) developed the report after jointly hosting a One Health Zoonotic Disease Prioritisation Workshop for the United States.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1125609/plague-zoonotic-influenza-rabies-pandemic-cdc-disease-health>

## **Academic studies**

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### **Melbourne researchers develop vaccine for serious virus which mimics cold and flu**

While we often attribute its symptoms to the common cold or the flu, Professor Andrew Ostor of Emeritus Research says many of us may be suffering a prevalent but less recognised virus known as RSV. While we are all being encouraged to get the flu jab this season there is currently no preventative vaccine for RSV. But a top scientific team from Emeritus Research in Melbourne's east is working on a new one. Those recruited for the trial will receive the experimental vaccine as well as the flu jab.

<https://www.9news.com.au/national/flu-outbreak-vaccine-cold-flu-rsv-virus-emeritus-research/7a2f9788-6392-4197-896a-6721bb793e6a>

### **Hospitalization and death among patients with influenza, Guatemala, 2008-2012**

Researchers used an active facility-based surveillance platform for acute respiratory diseases in three hospitals in Guatemala, Central America, to estimate the incidence of laboratory-confirmed hospitalized influenza cases and identify risk factors associated with severe disease. They concluded that influenza is a major contributor of hospitalization and death due to respiratory diseases in Guatemala. Further application of proven influenza prevention and treatment strategies is warranted.

<https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-019-6781-6>

### **TransFLUas Study: Asymptomatic Influenza Transmission in Acute Health Care**

A significant number of asymptomatic people shed the influenza virus, thereby exposing other individuals in their vicinity, according to research presented at the 29th European Congress of

Clinical Microbiology & Infectious Diseases. Further, temporal and special proximity is insufficient to define a number of newly uncovered transmission clusters that had been undetected in routine surveillance.

<https://www.pulmonologyadvisor.com/home/topics/influenza/transfluas-study-asymptomatic-influenza-transmission-in-acute-health-care/>

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## **Pediatric influenza news**

### **Young WA child dies at Perth Children's Hospital from flu**

A young child has died in hospital from suspected influenza before WA's winter flu season has even started. WA has seen an unusually high number of flu cases this year ahead of the peak season, with almost 500 cases reported last month — treble the number of cases in April last year. Health Minister Roger Cook said the child died at Perth Children's Hospital in March, and urged parents to get their young children immunised against the flu, the jabs free for kids under five. Fewer than one in five WA children were vaccinated against the flu last year — the lowest rate in the country.

<https://thewest.com.au/news/health/young-wa-child-dies-at-perth-childrens-hospital-from-flu-ng-b881194850z>

### **CDC flu report: Pediatric death toll rises to 106**

In the U.S., health officials are reporting five more pediatric deaths related to flu, bringing the total to 106 as the season stretches into May. Across all ages, the CDC estimates 42.9 million people have gotten sick, 647,000 have been hospitalized and 61,200 have died this season. During the week ending May 4, about 1.6% of outpatient clinic visits were for flu, marking the third consecutive week rates fell below baseline

<https://www.aappublications.org/news/2019/05/10/flu051019>

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

### **No New Recorded**

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## **General Influenza News**

### **Health professionals threatened with disciplinary action if they spread anti-vaxx messages**

As Australia experiences an earlier than usual influenza outbreak combined with a five-year high in measles cases, health regulators have warned that health professionals who spread anti-vaccination messages will be disciplined. The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Authority [Ahpra] along with 16 national health boards have released a statement warning practitioners that they had a responsibility to the public to promote evidence that vaccines are safe and effective.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/may/10/health-professionals-spreading-anti-vaxx-messages-will-be-disciplined>

### **Health team tackles flu season with free jabs**

In Australia, health experts are encouraging everyone to get their flu shot, especially those who are eligible for a free vaccination. The Darling Downs Health and Hospital Services team visited several locations around the South Burnett to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people another opportunity to receive their annual influenza vaccination. Clinical health nurse Mandy Dederer said the 'Tackle Flu Before It Tackles You' campaign had received a good response in the South Burnett.

<https://www.gladstoneobserver.com.au/news/health-team-tackles-flu-season-with-free-jabs/3723679/>

### **Vaccination naysayers outnumbered**

In New Zealand, people are evenly divided about getting an influenza injection, according to The Gisborne Herald webpoll this week. Asked if they plan to get a flu vaccination this winter, 53 percent, or 172 responded yes while 43 percent, 140, said no. Four percent, or 11 respondents were

undecided. Among the comments from the yes voters were “necessary”, “done”, “I have already had it” and “Silly not to”.

<http://gisborneherald.co.nz/localnews/4089592-135/vaccination-naysayers-outnumbered>

### **Australia on track for severe flu season**

With 40,000 confirmed influenza cases in Australia this early in the season, experts this week warned that deaths in the country could hit 4000 unless infection rates slow before the winter peak, and urged the public to get a flu vaccination. The number of confirmed cases is triple the typical levels seen at this part of the flu season. In 2018 there were 58,000 recorded cases for the entire year. Robert Booy, who heads a collective of health organisations called the Immunisation Coalition, says that this flu season has been “really strange”.

<https://cosmosmagazine.com/biology/australia-on-track-for-severe-flu-season>

### **Flu season is here. Is the flu different to a cold? Is man flu real?**

A case of summer flu has seen record infection numbers in the first few months of 2019, with more than 40,000 lab-confirmed cases in Australia. In Victoria, there have been 23 influenza outbreaks in aged-care homes; 17 elderly Victorians and at least one child have already died. NSW had seven flu-related deaths between January and March. Record quantities of the flu shot have been ordered but doctors are already raising concerns about another possible flu-vaccine shortage.

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/what-is-flu-what-is-a-cold-and-is-man-flu-real-20190509-p511pl.html>

### **250,000 could be affected by flu pandemic**

A flu pandemic has been put to the top of the list of “risks” facing Cumbria. The “worst-case scenario” could see half of Cumbria’s 500,000 population affected, a report said. That would lead to “unprecedented” demand on the emergency services and local councils, it found. Although rare, councils have had to consider the impact of flu pandemic as part of their business continuity plans if disaster struck.

<https://www.nwemail.co.uk/news/17631047.250000-could-be-affected-by-flu-pandemic/>

## **Burden of disease**

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### **Flu hospitalization rate rises slightly as overall flu activity fades**

In the U.S., the flu numbers have fallen drastically over the last month, as the season seems to be wrapping up, officials say. For the week ending May 4, only two states reported a higher level of flu activity -- officially termed low activity -- according to the CDC. Local flu activity was reported in 18 states, while sporadic activity was reported in 22 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Last week also saw five pediatric deaths from flu-related illnesses, bringing the season total to 106.

[https://www.upi.com/Health\\_News/2019/05/10/Flu-hospitalization-rate-rises-slightly-as-overall-flu-activity-fades/2681557515799/](https://www.upi.com/Health_News/2019/05/10/Flu-hospitalization-rate-rises-slightly-as-overall-flu-activity-fades/2681557515799/)

*Additional sources: (Becker's Hospital Review) (CIDRAP)*

### **Health department confirms 201 flu deaths in North Carolina so far in the 2018-19 season**

A total of 201 people in North Carolina have died from the flu this season, according to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. Over the last recorded week, there was one new flu-related death. The CDC recommends vaccination against the flu for everyone 6 months and older. “Vaccination, vaccination, vaccination is the most important,” Dr. Dahhan said.

<https://abc11.com/health/one-person-died-from-the-flu-in-nc-last-week/5294110/>

### **Elderly man's death linked to flu, raises its death toll to 5 in El Paso, officials say**

An elderly man's death was the fifth related to the flu in the El Paso area this season, officials said. The city of El Paso’s Department of Public Health said the man was in his mid-80s and had underlying medical conditions. Health officials said he had not received the flu vaccine this season.

<https://www.elpasotimes.com/story/news/health/2019/05/10/elderly-mans-death-linked-flu-death-toll-5-el-paso-area/1>

[158672001/](#)

### **Flu deaths rise to 77 across CT**

In Connecticut, two more deaths associated with the flu have been reported, bringing the seasonal total to 77. With two more flu-linked deaths statewide in the 18th week of the year, the flu — again — remains widespread throughout Connecticut. Last season there were 154 flu-associated deaths from the illness in Connecticut — including at least three children. Nationwide, more than 80,000 people died from flu last season.

<https://www.ctpost.com/local/article/Flu-deaths-rise-to-77-across-CT-13834707.php>

### **Melissa Crady was young, vibrant and among 199 North Carolinians who died from the flu this season**

Nearly 200 people have died in North Carolina from influenza or its complications so far this flu season — 199 to be precise. Include Melissa Crady of Fayetteville in the group of 199. Melissa was born 36 years ago with chronic idiopathic neutropenia, a blood condition that causes a reduced number — or the complete absence — of neutrophils, a type of white blood cell that is responsible for much of the body's protection against infection. Melissa had almost no immune system. State health officials say the best way to prevent the flu is to get vaccinated. Yet, of the 148 people who died from the flu or its complications by March 16 of this year, 59 percent had not gotten a flu shot.

<https://www.northcarolinahealthnews.org/2019/05/10/melissa-crady-was-young-vibrant-and-among-199-north-carolinians-who-died-from-the-flu-this-season/>

### **Up to 647,000 Influenza-Related Hospitalization Projected**

The 2018-2019 influenza season appears to be ending in the Northern Hemisphere. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported influenza activity across the USA was below the national baseline, for the 3rd week in a row. During Week #18, there were 5 additional fatalities reported as of May 4, 2019. This new CDC data increases the total number of pediatric deaths to 106 during the 2018-2019 flu season. The CDC is estimating the total number of adult deaths related to influenza viruses could reach 61,200

<https://www.precisionvaccinations.com/106-pediatric-deaths-related-influenza-reported-cdc>

## **Flu Surveillance in Animals**

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### **35 poultry farms in Belgium affected by bird flu**

Thirty-five farms in Belgium have been affected by a strand of avian influenza that is harmless to humans, the country's agriculture department says. Since the beginning of April, a few dozen poultry farms have been affected by a bird flu virus. The Federal Minister for Agriculture Denis Ducarme emphasises that the virus in question is 'completely harmless to human health'. Moreover, the virus in question - bird flu virus of the H3 type - is not on the list of regulated and notifiable diseases.

[https://www.farminguk.com/News/35-poultry-farms-in-Belgium-affected-by-bird-flu\\_51972.html](https://www.farminguk.com/News/35-poultry-farms-in-Belgium-affected-by-bird-flu_51972.html)