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The Hong Kong Medical Association

FOUNDED IN 1920·INCORPORATED IN 1960 AS A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE  
MEMBER OF WORLD MEDICAL ASSOCIATION AND CONFEDERATION OF MEDICAL ASSOCIATIONS IN ASIA & OCEANIA

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## 新聞稿

### 季節性流感病毒甲型 H3N2 基因飄移

為回應現時社會對季節性流感病毒甲型 H3N2 出現基因飄移之關注，傳染病顧問委員會於二零一五年一月二十日召開會議，並提出以下建議：

1. 季節性流感病毒基因排序不時發生輕微變異。雖然這種基因或抗原飄移會影響今年流感疫苗和流行的流感品種的匹配，以致有機會令預防流感疫苗的效用大減，但這並不表示會出現流感大爆發。
2. 美國和本港研究數據顯示，大部份在社區肆虐的甲型流感病毒相對二零一二/五十/德克薩斯甲型和北半球現用流感疫苗的甲型(H3N2)病毒出現了抗原和基因飄移，並接近在 2015 年被選為南半球流感疫苗的 2013/9715293/瑞士甲型(H3N2)病毒。
3. 流感疫苗被認定能減低流感病發率和嚴重性。暫時估計美國今年對抗流感引致疾病的疫苗整體成效有百份之廿三，相比起過去十年約百份之十至六十。專家仍不斷進行研究有關疫苗對更嚴重流感引致入院或死亡的保護成效。
4. 在美國，二零一四/一五年度季度流感活動的嚴重程度和出現時間與頗(但並非特別)嚴重的二零一二/一三年度相約，而本地情況似乎與美國的接近。雖然香港隨著流感季節病人入院情況激增，但需要深切治療部接收的嚴重個案比例並不算特別高。
5. 因流行性流感病毒型號基因飄移而導致疫苗效用發生改變是意料中事，而現時觀察到的基因飄移並不影響我們對接種流感疫苗的有關建

議。現有疫苗對正在流行和其他有機會即將出現的病毒型號仍有一定保障，尤其是針對高危族的嚴重流感個案。

6. 針對現時的流感疫苗保護力不足，我們需要加強其他預防和治療的方法，尤其是對高危族。
7. 我們強烈建議有流感病徵人士在公眾地方或接觸家中弱者時佩戴口罩。在高峰期，容易產生嚴重併發症的高危人士(例如小孩、特別是小於兩歲兒童、孕婦、慢性病如哮喘、糖尿或心臟病患者、及六十五歲以上成年人)應避免前往人流過度密集的地方，如果難以避免，便應考慮佩戴口罩和加緊注意清潔雙手。
8. 神經氨酸酶抑制劑這類抗病毒治療方法能減低流感患病期和併發症。針對懷疑患上流感而需要入院、病情嚴重或不斷惡化、容易產生流感併發症的高危人士，包括小孩和孕婦，不論他們已接種疫苗與否，都應考慮使用上述治療。神經氨酸酶抑制劑擁有良好的安全記錄，但建議仍須監察可能出現的副作用。整體來說，預期效益大過小量可能出現的副作用機會。基於現有快速抗原檢測的敏感度有限，醫生可不用等待實驗室確診向臨床診斷為患上流感的高危人士處方抗病毒治療。一個陰性的快速抗原檢測結果並不排除流感的可能性，尤其是在流感的高峰期。

二零一五年一月廿三日

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

23 January 2015

### **Genetic drift of circulating seasonal influenza H3N2 strain**

In response to the current concern over the genetic drift observed in the circulating seasonal influenza H3N2 strain, the Advisory Committee on Communicable Diseases convened a meeting on 20 January 2015 and made the following recommendations.

1. Minor changes in the genetic sequences (genetic drift) of circulating seasonal influenza strains occur from time to time. While such genetic drifts are expected to affect the closeness of match between the recommended influenza vaccine strains and the circulating strains,

potentially affecting the efficacy of the influenza vaccine for the relevant year, they do NOT signify a potential for a major outbreak or pandemic.

2. Laboratory data in the United States and locally show that most influenza A (H3N2) viruses circulating in the community are antigenically and genetically drifted from A/Texas/50/2012, the A (H3N2) component of the 2014–15 Northern Hemisphere influenza vaccine, but similar to the A/Switzerland/9715293/2013 (H3N2) virus selected for the 2015 Southern Hemisphere influenza vaccine.
3. Influenza vaccines are known to reduce both the incidence and severity of influenza. In the US, the interim estimate of overall vaccine effectiveness against medically attended influenza illness (incidence) is 23% this year as compared to 10-60% in the past decade. Studies are still ongoing on its protective effectiveness against more severe forms of influenza requiring hospitalizations or resulting in deaths.
4. In the US, the severity and timing of influenza activity during the 2014–15 season has so far been similar to the moderately (but not particularly) severe 2012–13 season. The local situation appears to parallel that in the US. While there has been an upsurge of hospitalization with the influenza season in Hong Kong, the proportions of severe diseases requiring intensive care unit admissions are not particularly high.
5. Variations in vaccine effectiveness in association with genetic drift of circulating influenza strains are expected and the currently observed genetic drift in the circulating influenza strains does NOT affect our recommendations for influenza vaccinations. The influenza vaccines are still expected to offer meaningful protection against the current or other potentially upcoming circulating strains, particularly against severe forms of influenza in high risk groups.
6. The lower degree of match between the vaccine strains and the circulating strains calls for increased vigilance on other preventive and treatment measures, particularly among high risk groups.
7. Patients with symptoms of influenza are strongly advised to put on a surgical mask in public places or when coming into close contact with vulnerable persons at home. During peak influenza periods, persons (young children, especially children aged <2 years, pregnant women, persons with chronic medical conditions like asthma, diabetes, or

heart disease, and adults aged  $\geq 65$  years) at high risk of complications from influenza should avoid going to and staying in overcrowded places. If this is not avoidable, they may consider putting on a surgical mask and strict attention should also be paid to hand hygiene.

8. Antiviral treatment using neuraminidase inhibitors (NAI) has been shown to reduce the duration of illness and complications of influenza. Such treatment should be considered for any patient with suspected influenza who is hospitalized, has severe or progressive illness, or is at high risk for complications from influenza, including children and pregnant women, irrespective of vaccination history. NAI has a good safety profile but monitoring of possible side effects is generally recommended. The potential benefits generally outweigh the small risks of possible adverse effects. As the sensitivities of available rapid antigenic diagnostic tests for influenza are limited, empirical antiviral treatment may be considered in high risk patients with a clinical diagnosis of influenza without waiting for laboratory confirmation. A negative rapid antigenic diagnostic test does NOT rule out influenza, especially during peak influenza periods.

**編輯備忘：**

香港醫學會成立於一九二零年，旨在聯繫政府、各公立醫療機構、大學及私人執業的醫務工作者，交流意見，團結一心。醫學會致力將最新的醫療資訊及醫務發展傳遞與會員，提倡會員遵行專業操守，進而服務社會，維護民康。

**Notes to editors:**

The Hong Kong Medical Association, founded in 1920, aims to bring together Hong Kong's government, institutional, university and private medical practitioners for an effective exchange of views and co-ordination of efforts. The foremost objective of the Association is to safeguard and promote public health. The Association speaks collectively for its members and aims to keep its members abreast of medical ethics, issues and advances around the world. In fulfilling these goals, the association hopes to better serve the people of Hong Kong.

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