

## Kaiser Daily Global Health Policy Report **Evidence Does Not Connect H1N1 Vaccine To Patient Deaths, WHO Says**

**Friday, November 20, 2009**

The deaths of 41 people from six countries who had received the H1N1 (swine flu) vaccine were not directly linked to the vaccine, the WHO said Thursday, the [Associated Press/MSNBC](#) reports (11/19).

"Although some investigations are still ongoing, the results of the completed investigations reported to WHO have ruled out that the pandemic vaccine is the cause of death," Marie-Paule Kieny, WHO's top vaccine expert, said during a telephone conference, [Reuters](#) reports. "Reporting so far reconfirms that the pandemic flu vaccine is as safe as the seasonal flu vaccine," she added.

According to Kieny, 65 million doses of the H1N1 vaccine doses have reportedly been administered against H1N1. "Side-effects commonly reported include swelling and redness or pain at the injection site, although some had fever or headache, and all symptoms usually disappear after 48 hours," the news service writes (Nebehay, 11/19).

### **FDA Rejects New Type Of Flu Vaccine**

Also on Thursday, a U.S. "federal advisory committee narrowly rejected a new type of influenza vaccine ... that's made without relying on decades-old technology that employs millions of chicken eggs to grow viruses used for flu vaccines," the [Wall Street Journal](#) reports (Dooren, 11/19).

The FDA panel rejected a new type of influenza vaccine made in insect cells, requesting additional safety data before moving forward, [Reuters](#) reports. "The U.S. government is struggling to vaccinate the population against H1N1," the news service writes, and the new vaccine could be produced more quickly than the egg-based method, according to the company that developed it (Fox, 11/19).

### **Drugmakers Defend Vaccine Production, Say Regulatory Approval Slow**

"Manufacturers of the H1N1 influenza vaccine summoned to appear before a congressional committee on Wednesday defended their production of the vaccine and said they were prompt in informing federal officials of problems in manufacturing," CQ HealthBeat reports (Norman, 11/18).

"Pharmaceutical executives said their companies were working on ways to make flu vaccines more quickly and in greater quantities, but said regulatory approval was slow," [Reuters](#) reports. "They complained about U.S. reluctance to use

additives called adjuvants that can boost a vaccine's effects," according to the news service (Fox, 11/18).

### **Chinese Health Ministry Calls For Accuracy In Reporting Of H1N1 Deaths**

The Chinese health ministry on Thursday ordered health officials to ensure accuracy in their reporting of the cases of deaths from H1N1 in the country, after suspicions emerged Wednesday "when medical expert Zhong Nanshan was quoted by a newspaper in southern China's Guangdong province as questioning the official nationwide tally of 53 deaths out of nearly 70,000 cases," [Agence France-Presse](#) reports. According to the news service, "Zhong's opinion carries weight because he became something of a national hero by openly defying the official line on SARS to help reveal the true extent of the illness" (Martin, 11/19).

In related news, the [AP](#) reports on how aggressive measures to contain the H1N1 virus in China have had minimal success. "Despite initially declaring success, Beijing now acknowledges its swine flu outbreak is much larger than official numbers show," the news service writes, adding, "China's official count of some 63,000 reported illnesses with 53 deaths dwarfs estimates of millions of cases with nearly 4,000 deaths in the United States, a nation with about a third of China's population."

Despite the recent increase in the number of reported H1N1 cases, "China's Health Minister Chen Zhu defended his country's aggressive quarantine policy, telling the AP on Wednesday that the measures helped slow the spread of the virus long enough for China to develop a vaccine, which authorities are now scrambling to administer." The article includes comments from health experts about the failure of measures such as border closures and quarantines to contain the H1N1 virus and skepticism about the total cases of H1N1 reported in China (Cheng, 11/18).

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