



Asia-Pacific Workshop on surveillance, prevention and control of zoonotic influenza Paro, Bhutan, 29-31 August 2016

As a part of the tripartite coordination in the Asia-Pacific region, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and World Health Organization (WHO) supported the Royal Government of Bhutan to host Asia-Pacific workshop on surveillance, prevention and control of zoonotic influenza.

A total of 69 participants and observers from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand and Vietnam including FAO, OIE, WHO and partner organizations attended the workshop.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Various subtypes of avian and swine influenza A viruses including H5N1, H5N6, H9N2, H7N9 and H1N1v have been reported that are transmissible from animals to humans, i.e. zoonotic influenza.

The ongoing outbreaks of avian influenza are having an impact on the public health, animal health, trade and economy of several Asia-Pacific countries.

There are 29 National Influenza Centres (NICs), seven H5 Reference Laboratories, three Collaborating Centres (CCs) for influenza under WHO, and four OIE Reference Laboratories and two FAO Reference Centres for avian influenza in the Asia-Pacific region which continue to play a vital role in strengthening influenza surveillance, antigenic characterization, laboratory diagnostics, virus sharing for candidate vaccine development.

The Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS) is the key laboratory network for global influenza surveillance, which is coordinated by WHO. The OFFLU network, coordinated by FAO and OIE, aims to reduce the undesirable impacts of animal influenza viruses through promotion of effective collaboration between animal health experts and the human health experts. The OFFLU network contributes avian influenza data to the bi-annual WHO vaccine composition meetings for pandemic preparedness.

Global influenza surveillance under human and animal health has been strengthened over the last few years. However, challenges still exist including poor sentinel surveillance in some areas with good laboratories, geographical gaps in surveillance and sustainability in areas with resource constrained areas.

Laboratory capacity for the detection and isolation of emerging influenza viruses; timely sharing of isolates and specimens; participation in external quality assessments (EQA) such as proficiency testing are essential. Laboratory twinning is the best option for strengthening laboratory diagnostic capacity and quality assurance in countries with limited resources.

Bioinformatics and genomic characterization of animal and human influenza viruses is of increasing value to understand disease ecology. This can be used to better inform policy decisions at the interface for the control and prevention of animal and zoonotic influenza.

The Tool for Influenza Pandemic Risk Assessment (TIPRA) supports a timely and updatable hazard risk assessment for influenza viruses with pandemic potential. Risk assessments are done by focusing on virus's qualitative pandemic potential, as evaluated by experts. Outputs of TIPRA are



available to be incorporated into national risk assessments that also consider country's context and exposures.

FAO, OIE and WHO are working to develop a Joint Risk Assessment tool which will provide technical basis to assess risks of zoonotic influenza emerging at the human-animal interface. It has been pilot-tested in Myanmar.

The Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) framework is coordinated by WHO with preparedness and response activities for influenza of pandemic potential at country level in the five identified priority categories: "laboratory and surveillance capacity building; burden of disease; regulatory capacity building; risk communication; and planning for deployment".

The One Health (OH) approach is increasingly recognized at international and country levels for avian and pandemic influenza preparedness and response in the last 10 years. Several Asian countries have demonstrated good practices for institutionalization of One Health. However, there is a lack of understanding of One Health concept and acceptance by the different sectors.

Although OH approach was promoted to address emerging zoonoses such as avian influenza at the human-animal interface, there is a broader scope of expanding OH concept to food safety, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), climate change and disaster management.

There is a need of advocacy for OH promotion at higher level including generation of evidence-based information to convince policy makers. Ownership, trust building, collaborative activities for operationalization of One Health and sustainable funding remain a challenge.

The Asia Pacific Strategy for Emerging Diseases and Public Health Emergencies (APSED) and Global Framework for progressive control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GFTADs) are useful strategies to enhance human and animal influenza surveillance.

The Asia-Pacific workshop on multisectoral collaboration on prevention and control of zoonoses organized by FAO, OIE and WHO serves as an appropriate platform for advocacy and operationalization of One Health by sharing updated information and country experience.

Recommendations

Member States are requested to;

Ensure influenza viruses of pandemic potential are shared by NICs with WHO CCs and by national veterinary laboratories with OIE Reference Laboratories and FAO reference centres for confirmation and further characterization; and use the Influenza Virus Traceability Mechanism (IVTM) where appropriate.

Encourage sharing of avian influenza viral material and increased contribution of genetic and antigenic data on zoonotic influenza viruses with the international scientific community through the OFFLU network.

Continue participating in influenza proficiency testing at the regional and global level; and encourage development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for sample shipment in line with international standards/guidelines.

Strengthen active surveillance for zoonotic influenza including influenza-like illnesses (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infection (SARI) surveillance.



Promote passive surveillance for highly pathogenic avian influenza reporting especially at community levels (through public awareness and provision of incentive to farmers to report events).

Involve the environment and/or wildlife sector for enhanced surveillance for zoonotic diseases in wildlife through high level policy advocacy, involvement of key stakeholders and capacity building.

Reduce the risks of disease spread from movements of animals and their products across borders through regular bilateral consultations for surveillance, prevention and control of transboundary animal diseases including zoonoses.

Strengthen border health control as per IHR (2005) requirements and the certification of imports/export of animals and animal products as per OIE requirements.

Develop a National One Health Strategy with action plan, timeline and costing with performance indicators and take initiative to institutionalize OH coordinating unit at higher level considering country specific situation.

Consider organization of IHR-PVS bridging workshop in order to improve better understanding of core capacities required for implementation of International Health Regulations (2005) and International Animal Health Code.

Organize OH workshop regularly at national and subnational level to enhance coordination and collaboration amongst OH stakeholders.

Partner organizations are requested to;

Continue to support Member States to strengthen zoonotic influenza epidemiology and laboratory surveillance and networks, including economics and burden of zoonotic influenza activities.

Facilitate and/or support cross-border and regional dialogue to reduce risk of disease spread through animal movements by enhancing surveillance through the epizone approach and establishing platform for timely information sharing and trust building.

Continue data sharing and collaboration between OFFLU network and GISRS on emerging zoonotic influenza viruses at the human-animal interface.

Coordinate the integration of zoonotic influenza in the existing regional strategies such as APSED, GFTADs for its surveillance at the human-animal interface including capacity building through laboratory twinning process.

Urge to take Global stewardship for promotion of OH (advocacy, capacity building and resourcing) including development of tool for OH advocacy and operationalization.

Appeal regional and sub-regional organizations, networks and academia to organize workshops and conferences on a regular basis to facilitate sharing of country's experiences on operationalization of One Health and networking.