



Letter to Editor  
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### Swine flu in India - time to think.

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## Swine flu in India - time to think.

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Dear Sir,

In recent years, there are several out breaks of H1N1, different parts in the world, which is also a serious threat for India. In 2009 H1N1 created a pandemic, worldwide. In early April 2009, cases of human infection with H1N1 virus were detected in the United States and Mexico [1]. In India, the first confirmed case was detected on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2009, when a man travelling from New York via Dubai and Delhi tested positive for the H1N1 Influenza virus in the city of Hyderabad [2]. Afterwards a second case was confirmed by the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune, in a mother and son from Chennai on 1 June 2009 [3]. New strain of Influenza virus A H1N1 was identified in April 2009, spreaded worldwide as "swine flu". The recent strain has a similirity the swine flu virus, but genetically dissimilar with earlier known isolates [4].

By September 2010, a large number of population, an estimated 44,687 positive H1N1 cases were detected in India, with a mortality rate of 5.76% [5]. 10,527 confirmed cases of H1N1 was detected in the Delhi city and the death toll reached 118 till August 2010 [6].

A report from Gujarat shows that, less than a year time (August 2009 - February 2010) 1209 cases were reported and 289 patients died. A broad sprectum disease was experienced ranging from mildly symptomatic patients to severe illness [7].

There are different ways through which adults and children in the extended family were exposed to this deadly infectious disease. During the rituals that follow death, which include congregation and communal dining is a major challenge for us, because of exposure to aerosols and fomites [8]. A large number of individuals exposed in the family subsequently developed symptoms of swine flu are managed promptly as per Clinical management protocol.

**There are several risk factors for severe disease are listed below [9]:**

- Infants and young children (mainly below 2 years)
- Pregnant women till 2 weeks postpartum
- Patients with asthma and COPD
- chronic cardiac disease conditions like congestive cardiac failure
- Diabetes
- Persons with kidney and liver disease, neuromuscular, neurocognitive, and seizure disorders, hemoglobinopathies, HIV infection, or secondary conditions, such as immunosuppressive medication or malignancy;
- Children under aspirin therapy
- Age > 65 years

Considering all these facts, this is an important time to take necessary steps with the patients with swine-flu like signs and symptoms, who should be isolated and managed aggressively. Literatures suggests that proper knowledge can reduce the risk factor [10]. Govt. should take necessary strategic set up to combat with the outbreak of this disease.

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