

Sent: Wednesday, April 13, 2005 12:10 PM

To: safetyshorts@lists.it.uab.edu

Subject: [Safetyshorts] Safety Shorts: Safety Alert 4/13/2005

This morning UAB Biosafety was alerted to the fact that a strain of flu virus, influenza A/H2N2, was distributed during the 4th quarter of 2004 or 1st quarter of 2005 by the College of American Pathologists (CAP) as a proficiency test sample. This particular strain killed about 70,000 in the United States in the 1957-58 pandemic. Because the virus has not been included in flu vaccines since 1968, anyone born after that time would not be immune to that strain.

World Health Organization influenza chief Klaus Stohr has told The Associated Press the risk is relatively low that a lab worker will get sick, but there was a concern because of the large number of labs that received it. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control agrees there is little risk to the public from the virus. CDC spokesman Dan Rutz said there have been no cases of illness reported and insisted there is "no public health threat." A link to the WHO announcement is attached for your information.

http://www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/h2n2_2005_04_12/en/

As a follow-up to this incident UAB Biosafety requires the following information from all labs that received viral CAP proficiency test samples during the 4th quarter of 2004 or 1st quarter of 2005.

Please send the following information immediately by email, fax or phone to Elaine Broussard, Directory of Biosafety:

- Lab contact name and phone number.
- Date CAP sample was received.
- Was influenza A identified?
- Date CAP sample was destroyed.
- Have you been contacted by CAP or other agency regarding this issue? If so, who and when.
- Have any employees displayed flu symptoms? If so who and when.

Thank you for your help,
Elaine E. Broussard, Director of Biosafety
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