

## Swine flu - H1N1

### Results for 2009 and infection predictions for 2010

The H1N1 virus outbreak of 2009 did not result in a significant increase in the number of deaths, nor penetrate the community at a greater rate than seasonal influenza, however people infected with the disease were sicker and more likely to be hospitalised, reported Professor David Smith at the Royal College of Pathologists Australasia (RCPA)'s annual Pathology Update conference.

Professor Smith, from the division of microbiology and infectious diseases at Pathwest, says whilst there was not a significant increase in the number of patients presenting to doctors in comparison to previous seasons of influenza, those who did seek GP care were considerably more ill.

"H1N1 patients suffered from more serious symptoms of fever, cough, myalgia and diarrhoea in 2009 when compared with normal seasonal influenza, says Professor Smith.

"Hospital admissions as a result of H1N1 were also greater than during a normal flu season and those being treated in hospital were younger and were admitted for longer periods.

"It's also important to note that 30% of those admitted to hospital for H1N1 showed no previous risk factors."

Research and evidence predicts a moderate level of pandemic influenza activity this flu season and we can again expect to see an increase in moderate to severe disease in the 20-60 year old age bracket, though less than 2009.

"But we don't think infection rates or symptom severity will be as bad as last year," says Professor Smith.

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