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Bangladesh's preparedness on tackling Avian Influenza

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Background: The world is now under human pandemic threat by avian influenza viruses. As the human, animal and the environment interact closely from the dawn of the civilization, human health is tremendously influenced by animal health and their health issues. Like other countries, Bangladesh has also reported human cases of avian influenza subtype H1N1, H3, H5N1 and H9N2 across the country.

Surveillance program in Bangladesh: Influenza surveillance is being conducted since 2007 in 12 hospitals covering administrative divisions of the country in collaboration with IEDCR and ICDDR'B. National Influenza Surveillance, Bangladesh (NISB) started operating from April 2010 in 14 district hospitals under direct supervision of IEDCR. The National Rapid Response Team (NRRT) is under 7/24 alert and conducting investigation of reported cases of any suspected Influenza. IEDCR is also responsible for overall coordination and subsequent report preparation periodically.

Avian and pandemic preparedness plan of Bangladesh: There is a National Avian Influenza and Human Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response Plan in Bangladesh to prevent and control avian and human pandemic influenza. The preparedness plan encompasses strategy development including planning & coordination, surveillance, prevention & control, risk communication and operational research. The plan offers different strategies for different scenarios (whether Bangladesh is affected or not) involving both human and avian health through multi sectoral collaborative approach.

Lesson learned: The best way to prevent infection with avian influenza viruses is to avoid sources of exposure i.e. direct or close contact with infected poultry. Frequent hand wash with soap-water, maintenance of hygiene and infection control measures can prevent influenza virus infection.

Biography

S M Rashed-ul Islam is a Virologist & Researcher, working at the Department of Virology of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU). He completed his Medical graduation in 2004 from Dhaka University and obtained his M Phil in Medical Virology in 2012 from Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU). He is actively involved in the departmental academic, research and laboratory work. He has attended various workshops & seminars on virological and public health linked issues. Furthermore, he has also attended several conferences at both national and international levels. Besides virology, he has special interest in many Public Health focuses with his keen concern on emerging viral diseases like HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis B&C, universal health coverage, double burden diseases, etc. Until now, he has published six articles in peer reviewed national and international journals.

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