

Dear Colleague

UPDATE ON INFLUENZA A (H1N1) IN SCOTLAND

1. You will be aware that there has been a recent sharp increase in the number of confirmed cases of influenza A (H1N1) in Scotland. Twenty three new confirmed cases were reported both today and yesterday bringing the cumulative total to 88 confirmed cases. The new cases reported over recent days have almost entirely been centred around the south Glasgow, Paisley and Argyll and Bute areas (principally Dunoon).

2. Although the clinical picture of illness is generally consistent with that of seasonal flu, four cases have now been admitted to Intensive Care Units in Scotland. Although these patients are still under investigation, it would appear that not all have known underlying risk factors for influenza. Furthermore, presentations may be atypical. In common with the emerging epidemiology of this illness these patients are young, all aged under 50.

3. Please be alert to the possibility of influenza A (H1N1) in patients under the age of 50 presenting with community acquired pneumonia, or any acute respiratory disease. Hospitals should also be aware of the possibility of Influenza A (H1N1) in young patients with fever requiring high dependency or intensive care. Relevant samples should be taken as soon as this diagnosis is suspected and passed to laboratories promptly. More advice can be obtained from your local virology department.

**From the Chief Medical Officer
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Addresses

For action
NHS Board Chief Executives
NHS Board Directors of Public
Health
NHS Board Medical Directors

4. You should contact your local Health Protection Team as soon as you suspect a case. Any need for prophylaxis, treatment or contact tracing will be advised by them and should be decided in consultation with them and HPS.

5. Guidance from Health Protection Scotland on the use of personal protective equipment and the use of face masks is available at <http://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk>. New guidance for the clinical management of care in intensive care units and in high dependency settings is also available. This website is updated regularly and should be checked regularly.

Yours sincerely

Harry Burns

DR HARRY BURNS