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Pandemic influenza: Experience in a flu OPD of a tertiary care hospital

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Background: In April 2009, Mexican health authorities announced an outbreak of a novel H1N1 influenza virus, which subsequently caused a pandemic. The world is now moving into the post-pandemic period. The experience gained in handling this pandemic at various levels under different settings has provided us many lessons for the future.

Objective: To study the profile of various activities undertaken at flu screening centre as a response to pandemic influenza in a tertiary care hospital.

Methods: Record-based study conducted in a tertiary care hospital of Pune. Required data was collected from records of flu OPD, ward and local health authority and interviewing related staff. Study included data from October 2009 to October 2010.

Results: A total of 8020 people presenting with influenza like illness (ILI) were screened in the flu OPD under study. Out of these, only 388 (4.84%) met clinical criteria where throat samples were collected, out of which only 81 were found to be positive (20.88%). Total three fatalities (3.7%) occurred out of 81 who had tested positive. Most cases of flu were managed at home (76.54%) while only 19 (23.4%) lab confirmed cases of H1N1 required hospitalisation.

Conclusion: Majority of cases of H1N1 (2009) were managed at home. Early diagnosis, quick initiation of treatment, infection control measures, and good care at the hospital can effectively reduce morbidity and mortality in H1N1 pandemic.

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