China WHO chief: Beijing H7N9 case not surprising

April 14 2013

The head of the World Health Organization's office in China Michael O' Leary speaks to journalists outside the WHO office in Beijing Sunday, April 14, 2013. O'Leary said Sunday that it wasn't surprising that a new strain of bird flu that has sickened dozens in eastern China has spread to the capital. (AP Photo/Andy Wong)

(AP)—A World Health Organization official said Sunday that it wasn't surprising that a new strain of bird flu has spread to China's capital after

sickening dozens in the eastern part of the country.

Up until Saturday when Beijing officials reported the capital's first case of H7N9, all cases had been in Shanghai and other eastern China areas. On Sunday, the first two cases were reported in central Henan province, which is next to Beijing.

It's not the case that everyone confirmed infected with H7N9 was "clustered in one small area with the same source of exposure," said Michael O'Leary, head of WHO's office in China. "So we've been expecting new cases to occur ... Furthermore, we still expect that there will be other cases."

A 7-year-old girl was Beijing's first confirmed case of H7N9, which has now sickened 51 people, of whom 11 died.

Health officials believe the virus that was first spotted in humans last month is spreading through direct contact with infected fowl.

In this photo taken on Saturday, April 13, 2013, health workers prepare to enter the home of a seven-year-old H7N9 bird flu patient to take blood samples from her parents at Gucheng village on the outskirt of Beijing. China. The World Health Organization's chief said Sunday that it wasn't surprising that a new strain of bird flu that has sickened dozens in eastern China has spread to the capital. (AP Photo) CHINA OUT

O'Leary said "the good news" was that there was still no evidence that humans had passed on the virus to other humans.

"As far as we know, all the cases are individually infected in a sporadic and not connected way," he said, adding that the source of infection is still being investigated.

The girl, whose parents are in the live poultry trade, was admitted to a hospital Thursday with symptoms of fever, sore throat, coughing and

headache, the Beijing Health Bureau said.

O'Leary said early treatment can be effective, as demonstrated by the girl who was recovering in hospital and in stable condition.

In the only other reported cases outside of eastern China, health officials in Henan province announced that tests on two men Thursday revealed they had the virus.

In this photo taken on Saturday, April 13, 2013, security guards clear out a stall belonging to the parents of a seven-year-old H7N9 bird flu patient as people sit outside the family's home in Gucheng village on the outskirt of Beijing. The World Health Organization's chief said Sunday that it wasn't surprising that a new strain of bird flu that has sickened dozens in eastern China has spread to the capital. (AP Photo) CHINA OUT

They said a 34-year-old restaurant chef who had displayed flu symptoms for about a week was in critical condition in hospital, while a 65-year-old farmer who was in frequent contact with poultry was in stable condition after receiving treatment.

They said 19 people who had been in close contact with the two men had not shown any flu symptoms.

China has been more open in its response to the new virus than it was a decade ago with an outbreak of SARS, when authorities were highly criticized for not releasing information.

Copyright 2013 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Citation: China WHO chief: Beijing H7N9 case not surprising (2013, April 14) retrieved 26 April 2024 from https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-04-china-chief-beijing-h7n9-case.html

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.