

WHO not ruling out human bird flu jump

May 24 2006



The World Health Organization is not ruling out the deadly H5N1 bird flu virus jumped from human to human in a tightly knit Indonesian family.

The country's Ministry of Health confirmed that a seventh man died Monday in the village of Kubu Sembelang in northern Sumatra.

The agency said preliminary findings indicate three of the confirmed cases spent the night of April 29 in a small room together with the woman who was the initial case when she was symptomatic and coughing frequently.

"Although human-to-human transmission cannot be ruled out, the search for a possible alternative source of exposure is continuing," WHO said in

a statement. "To date, the investigation has found no evidence of spread within the general community and no evidence that efficient human-to-human transmission has occurred."

The virus has killed more than 120 people worldwide since 2003, with the majority of the deaths in Southeast Asia.

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