

WHO probes six Indonesian bird flu deaths

May 17 2006

World Health Organization officials are studying the deaths of six family members from bird flu in Indonesia and say there was no human-to-human transmission.

The cluster of infections happened in a village in the Karo district in northern Sumatra where eight members of an extended family became ill after a recent gathering and six of them died, The Wall Street Journal reported.

"There is no one else who has any evidence of illness among people who were in close association with the victims," said Steven Bjorge of the WHO in Jakarta. "What we're finding is that there's no evidence of any further spread beyond this one cluster."

The latest deaths bring the total to 30 people who have died from the H5N1 viral disease in Indonesia this year, the highest death rate in the world in 2006.

The virus has killed 115 people worldwide since it emerged in Southeast Asia in 2003, the BBC said.

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Citation: WHO probes six Indonesian bird flu deaths (2006, May 17) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2006-05-probes-indonesian-bird-flu-deaths.html>

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