

Younger people more vulnerable to bird flu

July 3 2006



A study by the World Health Organization indicates younger people are more likely to die from avian flu, The New York Times reported Sunday.

The study, released Friday, analyzed more than 200 cases and found the highest death rate occurred in patients aged 10 to 19. Patients in that age group were 17 percent more likely to die than an older patient, the Times said.

The study drew comparisons to the 1918 Spanish flu epidemic, when the death rate for people 18 to 30 soared while other age groups did not. The

WHO study said the strength of a young person's immune system may help the virus take over the body sooner.

Ninety percent of the avian flu cases worldwide have been in people under 40.

Indonesia and Vietnam are the two countries hardest hit by the avian flu, which has claimed three times as many lives this year than in previous years, the Times said.

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