

H3N1 pig flu virus found in South Korea

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Scientists say they have identified the H3N1 swine influenza virus in domestic pigs in South Korea.

A highly infectious respiratory pathogen, the H3N1 influenza A virus is a new genetic reassortment of influenza viruses first identified in U.S. pigs during 2004. The virus can be found in birds and mammals, including humans, but it is not generally transmissible between birds and humans.

Earlier this year, researchers isolated H3N1 viruses in pigs with respiratory diseases at two commercial swine farms in Korea. Further testing confirmed the H3N1 viruses presenting were reassortments of an H3 human-like virus and other genes from swine influenza viruses and that pig-to-pig and farm-to-farm transmission had occurred.

Additionally, analysis of experimentally infected mice suggested the potential to transmit the virus between pigs and other mammalian hosts.

"Given the evidence that pigs can support the reassortment of influenza viruses from humans and other species, it is prudent that we enhance surveillance for atypical influenza viruses in pigs as part of overall pandemic preparedness efforts," the researchers said.

J.Y. Shin and colleagues at Pukyong National University report their findings in the November issue of the *Journal of Clinical Microbiology*.

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