

Swine flu tolls leaps past 52,000, 231 dead: WHO

June 22 2009

The World Health Organisation on Monday reported a huge leap in the swine flu pandemic toll to more than 52,000 people infected and 231 dead.

The toll has risen by more than 7,873 cases and 51 deaths since Friday, highlighting the steady spread of the A(H1N1) virus.

Swine flu has now been reported in 100 countries and territories.

And figures yet to be incorporated into the UN health agency's official figures indicate an even higher toll. The Philippines has reported the first swine flu death in Asia, Iran joined the countries reporting their first cases, while Singapore quarantined a Hong Kong football team.

The United States led a group of countries that have seen dramatic increases in cases of virus, according to the new WHO figures.

There were an extra 3,594 cases taking the US total to 21,449 with 87 deaths. Mexico was stable with 7,600 cases and 113 deaths.

But Chile, which is entering the southern hemisphere winter has also been badly hit with 1,190 more cases (4,315), including four deadly.

There have been an extra 805 extra cases in Canada (5,710), where there have been 13 deaths.

Britain remains the worst-hit country in Europe. It has recorded 754 extra cases taking its total to 2,506, including one death.

In Australia there are 237 extra cases at 2,436, with one death. In Japan there are 160 more cases at 850. China has an extra 220 cases at 739. China's health ministry website on Sunday said 414 people had fallen ill with swine flu.

A 49-year-old woman in the Philippines became Asia's first fatality linked to swine flu, health authorities said.

She had been suffering from heart and liver ailments for some time, and the department said in a statement that her infection with the influenza A (H1N1) virus had worsened her condition.

The woman's case had gone undetected until a doctor visited her in her home when she was already in critical condition, the department said.

Singapore on Monday quarantined 18 members of the Hong Kong youth football team after three players tested positive for swine flu ahead of the Asian Youth Games.

Thirteen players, three coaches, a physiotherapist and a team official were placed under quarantine at a suburban beach resort, a Games spokeswoman said.

Singapore authorities quarantined 19 members of the Philippine football squad at the weekend after one player tested positive for A(H1N1).

The spread of swine flu was highlighted when Iran's health ministry reported the country's first virus case in a 16-year-old boy who had just been to the United States, the the official IRNA news agency said.

The WHO said that its figures could not be considered reliable because some countries were no longer keeping total figures while other poor countries did not have the means to reliably detect cases.

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Citation: Swine flu tolls leaps past 52,000, 231 dead: WHO (2009, June 22) retrieved 11 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-06-swine-flu-tolls-dead.html>

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