

Nottingham scientists commissioned for urgent swine flu research

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Scientists at The University of Nottingham and Health Protection Agency East Midlands are carrying out urgent research into the swine flu virus after being commissioned as part of the government's response to the pandemic.

Researchers want to find out how long someone is contagious for and advise on a 'safe distance' from the patient.

The study is being led by Professor Jonathan Nguyen Van Tam of the University of Nottingham's School of Community Health Sciences and the Health Protection Agency East Midlands.

Researchers will take daily nose swabs from people suffering from H1N1 [influenza](#) over a period of at least a week to see how much virus is in the nose and how quickly it disappears.

They will also take samples from hard surfaces and from the air around the patient using a special filter device. Using this data they aim to work out how much virus is being excreted and how long someone is contagious for. They also want to discover whether the virus is more prominent on surfaces or in the air as well as advising on what is a 'safe' distance from the patient.

The research will be carried out in children as well as adults because children seem to hold onto the virus for longer. The study plans to test swabs from 25 to 30 children in hospital and the same number in the

community. Around 50 adults in hospital and at home will also be tested. Patients in hospital will be identified through the Hospital Trusts in Nottingham, Leicester and Sheffield. The researchers plan to recruit patients in the community via adverts in the local press.

The study is part of a programme of research commissioned by the National Institute for Health Research on behalf of the Department of Health. The results of the University's research will be available to the NHS in the autumn.

Professor Van Tam said: "Very little is currently known about the H1N1 virus making predicting the numbers of people likely to catch it and how best to treat them very hard. For example we do not know how long the virus is excreted by infected humans and how much [virus](#) is spread to surfaces and carried in the air."

Professor Dame Sally Davies, Director General of Research and Development at the Department of Health said: "We are rapidly learning about the emerging [swine flu](#) risk profile - solid clinical and scientific evidence must be at the heart of this. The research projects announced today will ensure the UK remains well armed to respond to swine flu, help prevent infection and save lives."

This is one of a series of research projects relating to H1N1 influenza being managed by the NIHR Evaluation Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre (NETSCC) on behalf of the National Institute for Healthcare Research. To view the full project details visit www.netscc.ac.uk/pandemicflu

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