

How H1N1 differs from other viruses as a respiratory illness

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The 2009/2010 Influenza A (H1N1) is one of several viruses responsible for respiratory-related infections. A new study from Rhode Island Hospital examined patients with viruses and found distinguishing characteristics of the H1N1 virus in how it affects respiratory illness. Their findings will be presented at the annual meeting of the Infectious Diseases Society of America to be held in Vancouver, Canada on Friday, Oct. 22.

Phil Chan, MD, an [infectious diseases](#) fellow at Rhode Island Hospital, studied the signs, symptoms, and laboratory findings of 668 adult and pediatric patients who were treated at Rhode Island Hospital or its partner, The Miriam Hospital, between October and December 2009 with a confirmed viral infection.

Chan says, "Compared to patients with other viruses, individuals with novel [Influenza](#) A, or H1N1, were more likely to present with subjective fever, cough, sore throat, nausea/vomiting. The mean white blood count of patients with H1N1 is lower than with other viruses as well."

Leonard Mermel, DO, medical director of epidemiology and infection control at Rhode Island Hospital and professor of medicine at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, is a co-author. Mermel adds, "Perhaps more striking is that patients with the novel Influenza A [virus](#) may have higher mortality rates compared to other respiratory viruses in the patients studied. As a result of this study, and based on available data in the literature, we recommend that high-risk

[patients](#) infected with novel Influenza A receive expedient antiviral therapy." Mermel is also a physician with University Medicine.

In his presentation, Chan will provide more details on the findings of this study.

Provided by Lifespan

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