

Lessons learned from the H1N1 pandemic

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The H1N1 pandemic influenza provided several important lessons that may help in preparing for future influenza outbreaks, write Drs. Donald Low and Allison McGeer in an analysis in *CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal)*.

Although the death rate was lower than initially projected, the years of life lost was significant because "deaths from the 2009 pandemic were skewed toward younger ages than deaths from seasonal [influenza](#)," write the authors, both affiliated with Mount Sinai Hospital and the University of Toronto. More than three-quarters of cases were in people younger than 30, peaking in the 10 to 19 year old age group.

While mistakes occurred in the response to the [outbreak](#), such as confusion over vaccination dates and roll out plans as well as delays in vaccine manufacturing and unclear communication messages, there are valuable learnings.

"Last year's events clearly show that our current methods of [vaccine](#) production are too slow for an adequate response to a pandemic, that much of our planning for pandemic-related vaccination was incomplete, and that even the best intentioned program can be undermined by unanticipated internal and external events," write Dr. Low and Dr. McGeer.

Despite planning, Canada did not adequately address risks to vulnerable populations such as [pregnant women](#), aboriginal people and people in close contact. Communication was a major challenge and learning how

to clearly communicate risk should be a priority before the next pandemic.

Provided by Canadian Medical Association Journal

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