

Indonesia reports second bird flu death this year

January 20 2012

Indonesia on Friday reported its second human death from bird flu this year, with the death of a five-year-old girl who recently lost her relative to the deadly virus.

Concerns about avian influenza have risen in the region after China in late December reported its first fatality from the [H5N1 virus](#) in 18 months.

Vietnam on Thursday reported its first human death from the virus in nearly two years, as the virus also claimed the life of a toddler in Cambodia.

The latest Indonesian victim lived in the same house with a 24-year-old relative who died of the virus on January 7 but authorities say there is no evidence of human-to-human transmission between the two infected people.

"The child passed away after being treated for a few days at a hospital," Tjandra Yoga Aditama, the head of [communicable diseases](#) at Indonesia's health ministry, told AFP.

"We have conducted several tests and the results showed that she contracted the same H5N1 avian influenza virus that was detected before, so the virus has not developed," he said.

The girl had contact with poultry around their neighbourhood, he said,

but could not confirm whether she had contracted the virus from chickens or pigeons -- both found in her neighbourhood of Tanjung Priok in north Jakarta.

Indonesia has been the hardest-hit by [bird flu](#), with 150 deaths reported between 2003 and 2011, according to the [World Health Organization](#).

"With this case, the cumulative number of bird [flu cases](#) in Indonesia since 2005 has reached 184 cases, 152 of those ended in death," the health ministry said on its website.

Nine Indonesians died from the virus last year, including two children on the resort island of Bali in October.

The virus typically spreads from birds to humans through direct contact, but experts fear it could mutate into a form easily transmissible between humans, with the potential to kill millions in a pandemic.

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