

China reports first H7N9 bird flu death this year

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China has reported its first death from the H7N9 bird flu virus in 2014 after a significant drop-off in fatalities following an outbreak last year.

A patient in the southern province of Guangdong died of the disease on Monday, the provincial health authority said on its website Tuesday.

Official statistics compiled by China's health ministry show that by the end of October last year there had been 136 H7N9 cases and 45 deaths in the outbreak which began in February.

The ministry separately announced another three cases and one death for the month of November, while [provincial governments](#) have reported additional cases.

The latest death appears to be the first in mainland China since November.

A Hong Kong man infected with the strain died late last month, the city's first such fatality.

The H7N9 outbreak began in China in February 2013 and reignited fears that a virus could mutate to become easily transmissible, potentially triggering a pandemic.

Deaths, however, have dropped significantly since the end of June.

Besides Hong Kong, other cases of H7N9 infection have also been reported in Taiwan.

The latest H7N9 death in China came after a 73-year-old woman in central China died last month of a separate bird flu strain, H10N8, which biologists said had never been detected in humans before.

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