

H1N1 flu virus kills 14 in Costa Rica

January 6 2016

The H1N1 flu virus killed at least 14 people in Costa Rica over the past month, health authorities said Wednesday, but reassured that they did not see the illness causing a public emergency.

"There are 14 confirmed cases given by the influenza laboratory" in the University of Costa Rica's health research institute, Health Minister Fernando Llorca told a news conference.

He said another five deaths due to [respiratory complications](#) were being analyzed to see if the virus was also to blame.

The head of the country's social security agency, Rocio Saenz, said the virus—also known as "swine flu"—appeared to be propagating normally and there was no cause for alarm.

"It's the same virus as in 2009," when there was a pandemic, he said. "What has changed is the period it is arriving."

Officials urged the public to take preventative measures such as frequent hand-washing and to cover up coughing to limit contagion.

Costa Rica has purchased 950,000 vaccine doses against the virus and will start injecting them from April.

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