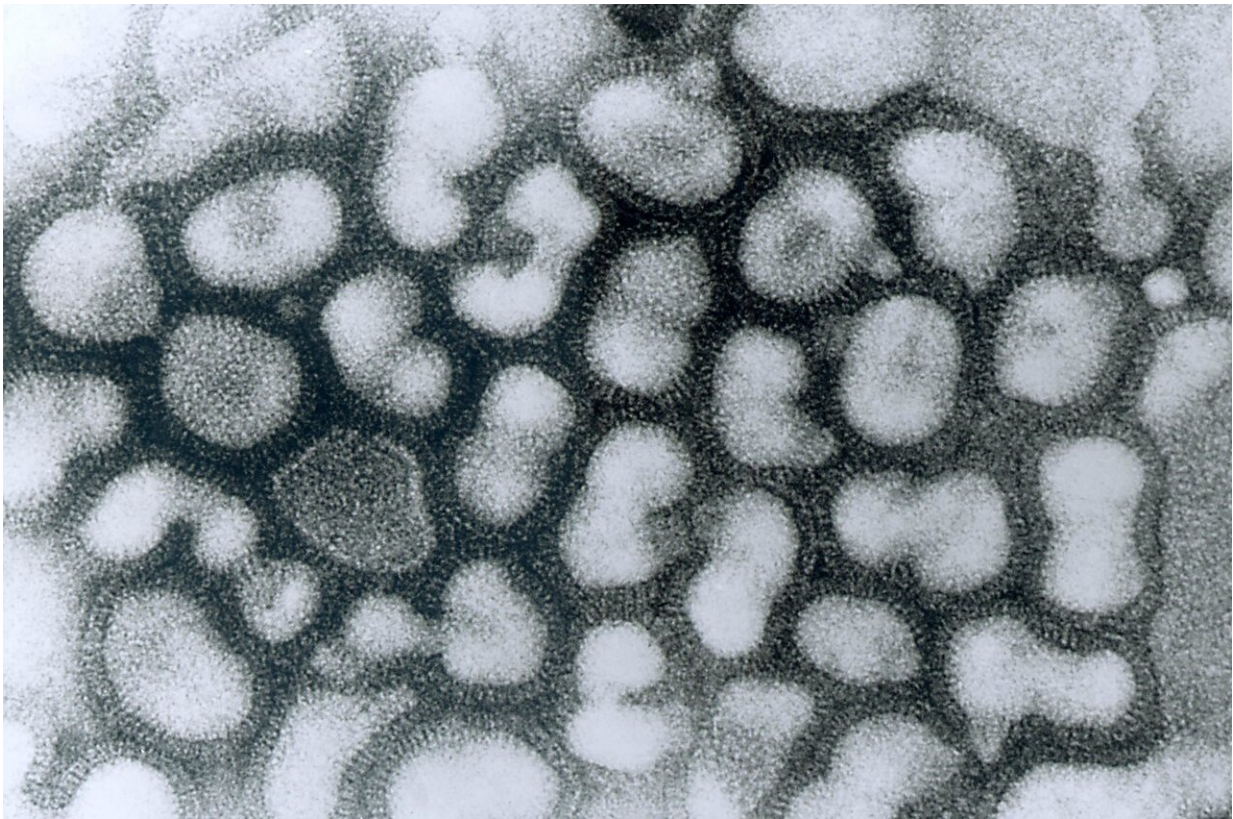


# Many older adults hospitalized with the flu face persistent functional decline

December 9 2020

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Transmission electron micrograph of influenza A virus, late passage. Credit: CDC

In a study of older adults admitted to the hospital with influenza and other acute respiratory illnesses during the 2011-2012 flu season,

functional decline was common—and for some, this decline was persistent and catastrophic. The findings are published in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*.

Among the 925 patients included in the study, 8.4% died, and 18.2% experienced a clinically meaningful loss of function at 30 days post-discharge, of whom half experienced catastrophic disability. Higher frailty at the time of [hospital](#) admission was associated with a higher likelihood of experiencing [functional decline](#), catastrophic disability, and death.

"We need to think about the longer-term implications of influenza for [older adults](#)—it is not just a short-term illness. This impact on function in the longer-term makes it all the more important to prevent influenza in the first place, including through vaccination," said lead author Melissa K. Andrew, MD, Ph.D., of Dalhousie University, in Canada.

**More information:** *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* (2020). DOI: [10.1111/jgs.16950](https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.16950)

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