Beat: Miscellaneous

6-year-old girl dies from bird flu in southern Cambodia

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USPA News - A six-year-old girl from southern Cambodia has died from bird flu after she was exposed to sick and dead poultry in her village, the country`s health ministry confirmed on Tuesday. It is the ninth bird flu death in the country so far this year.

The child, from the village of Preyleu in Banteay Meas district of Kampot province, developed fever and headache on June 24 and was hospitalized at a private clinic last Wednesday when her condition worsened with a cough and shortness of breath. She was treated with Tamiflu on Friday after being transferred to Kantha Bopha Children`s Hospital in Phnom Penh, but she died later that evening. The Cambodian Health Ministry said there had been recent poultry deaths in Preyleu village, and said the girl was likely exposed to sick and dead poultry before she became sick. The Cambodian Pasteur Institute confirmed Friday she was suffering from H5N1 influenza, making the girl the country`s 9th bird flu death so far this year. The ministry also confirmed two non-fatal bird flu cases that were discovered during routine retrospective re-testing of samples. One is a 5-year-old girl from Kampong Speu province who tested positive for influenza A in January and later recovered, while the second case is a 58-year-old man from Phnom Penh who also tested positive in January. "Avian influenza H5N1 remains a serious threat to the health of all Cambodians. This is the 13th case of H5N1 infection in humans this year," Cambodian Health Minister Mam Bunheng said. "Children also seem to be most vulnerable and are at high risk because they like to play where poultry are found. I urge parents and guardians to keep children away from sick or dead poultry and prevent them from playing with chickens and ducks." Since 2003, the H5N1 bird flu virus has killed or forced the culling of more than 400 million domestic poultry worldwide and caused an estimated $20 billion in economic damage before it was eliminated from most of the 63 infected countries. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the bird flu virus has infected at least 604 people since it first appeared, killing 357 of them. Most cases and deaths were recorded in Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt and China. Cambodia registered a total of eight fatal cases of human infection in 2011.

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