《首个中国大陆以外的H7N9病例确诊》

A man in Taiwan has been diagnosed with H7N9 bird flu and is critically ill with the first case of the disease found outside of mainland China.

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The 53-year-old Taiwanese man had been working in the Chinese city of Suzhou from the end of March to April 9, and began feeling feverish shortly after he returned home via Shanghai, according to a statement from Taiwan's health department.

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News that the disease has been found in travellers who had been in China comes as experts are watching closely for signs that the disease can be transmitted from person to person.

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"This is an unusually dangerous virus for humans, one of the most lethal influenza viruses we have seen so far," said Keiji Fukuda, a World Health Organisation official, at a briefing Wednesday in Beijing. He cautioned that researchers are still "at the beginning of understanding this virus." People also appear to catch the disease from birds more easily than other variants of bird flu, according to the organisation.

??????(WHO)??????(Keiji Fukuda)??????????????"????????????????????????????????"???????????"??????????"?WHO????????????????????????????

So far, the WHO says, it does not seem to be transmitted easily between people. However, Chinese authorities last week said they were investigating evidence of infections in some families to see whether the disease has spread from person to person.

WHO??

Taiwan has been particularly alert to spread of avian flu, as hundreds of thousands of Taiwanese businesspeople and Chinese tourists travel back and forth across the strait each month. The region of Suzhou, where the man had been travelling when he became ill, hosts a large number of factories owned by Taiwanese companies.

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The patient in Taiwan told doctors that he had not had been in contact with live or uncooked birds or eggs. Taiwan authorities say they have notified and will be monitoring those people whom the patient came in contact with.

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The virus has infected 108 people and killed 22 in mainland China as of Tuesday, according to authorities there.

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