



**WSAVA**  
**One Health Committee**

## **Press Information**

### **WSAVA Issues Influenza Advisory to Combat Confusion about Risks of Disease Transmission in India between Pets and Humans**

The One Health Committee (OHC) of the [World Small Animal Veterinary Association](http://www.wsavaveterinary.org) (WSAVA) has stepped in to help veterinarians in India to educate pet-owning clients in the face of a current upsurge in the occurrence of human pandemic A (H1N1) 2009 influenza virus A infection.

More than 30,000 cases have been reported in the outbreak so far with 1,731 people, sadly, having lost their lives<sup>1</sup>. The number of cases is continuing to rise, particularly in metropolitan cities, such as Mumbai. The outbreak is causing concern among pet owners, many of whom are now questioning whether it is possible to contract the infection from companion animals and whether they should give up their pets to protect their family.

A(H1N1)pdm09 (sometimes incorrectly called 'swine flu') is an influenza virus originating from swine, which spread to people and which is now transmitted primarily through human-to-human contact. Published studies have shown that the virus can be transmitted to domestic pets and this is the cause of the concern. Some owners are worried about the risk to their pet should a human member of the household contract the virus but far more are worrying that they might contract the virus from their pet. In fact, the evidence shows that humans are much more likely to catch influenza (of any type, including the 2009 H1N1 flu) from an infected person than from an animal.

Professor Michael Day, Chairman of the One Health Committee, said: "Protecting human health is paramount but, in reality, the risk to people of being infected with the 2009 H1N1 virus by their pets

is extremely small and not a case for relinquishing family pets. On the contrary, we are concerned about the welfare consequences for thousands of animals if their owners turn them out inappropriately."

"We hope our Advisory Notice will be of value to veterinarians in India - and potentially in other countries too - by giving them the information they need to educate and reassure their clients effectively."

The WSAVA Advisory is available for download here: [\(link\)](#)

The World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA) is an umbrella organization representing 145,000 veterinarians globally through 91 member associations.

<sup>1</sup> The Times of India 16 March 2015

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