Bird Flu Deaths Are Very Rare

By ACSH Staff — April 6, 2006

An April 6, 2006 article [1] by John Johnston on bird flu quotes ACSH and Dr. Elizabeth Whelan, shortly after the release of our report on the subject [2]:

"The potential for an avian flu pandemic is something we're constantly asked about," says American Council on Science and Health (ACSH) President Elizabeth Whelan.

"Still, unlike so many health scare stories we analyze, bird flu is not just hype but a real potential threat -- the tricky part is determining how big that potential is," she says.

The major uncertainty, according to Whelan, is whether the relevant bird flu virus, H5N1, which is already devastating flocks in Asia and Europe, will mutate into a form that has a similar devastating effect on humans.

"Right now, bird flu can kill humans under rare circumstances (such as when people are in close, frequent contact with raw duck blood, or other conditions highly unusual in developed countries and unusual even in undeveloped ones that increase the odds of transmission from birds to humans)."

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