

Heterogeneous and Dynamic Prevalence of Asymptomatic Influenza Virus Infections

Luis Furuya-Kanamori, Mitchell Cox, Gabriel J. Milinovich, Ricardo J. Soares Magalhaes, Ian M. Mackay, Laith Yakob

Influenza infection manifests in a wide spectrum of severity, including symptomless pathogen carriers. We conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of 55 studies to elucidate the proportional representation of these asymptomatic infected persons. We observed extensive heterogeneity among these studies. The prevalence of asymptomatic carriage (total absence of symptoms) ranged from 5.2% to 35.5% and subclinical cases (illness that did not meet the criteria for acute respiratory or influenza-like illness) from 25.4% to 61.8%. Statistical analysis showed that the heterogeneity could not be explained by the type of influenza, the laboratory tests used to detect the virus, the year of the study, or the location of the study. Projections of infection spread and strategies for disease control require that we identify the proportional representation of these insidious spreaders early on in the emergence of new influenza subtypes or strains and track how this rate evolves over time and space.

Infection of the respiratory tract with an influenza virus results in symptoms ranging from mild nonfebrile illness to severe disease and complications, including pneumonia, shock, renal failure, encephalopathy, and multiorgan dysfunction (1,2). Influenza viruses infect 5%–15% of the global population annually (3), accounting for ≈500,000 deaths (4) and 19 million disability-adjusted life years (5). The occurrence of asymptomatic influenza virus infections has been recognized for some time (6), but determinations about their possible role in transmission are largely speculative (7,8). Clarifying the role of these infections in virus transmission requires a solid understanding of their rate of occurrence.

Interest in the contribution of asymptomatic infection to influenza virus transmission has risen in recent years

Author affiliations: Australian National University, Acton, Australian Capital Territory, Australia (L. Furuya-Kanamori); University of Queensland, Herston, Queensland, Australia (M. Cox, G.J. Milinovich, R.J. Soares Magalhaes); Queensland University of Technology, Kelvin Grove, Queensland, Australia (I.M. Mackay); London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, London, UK (L. Yakob)

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3201/eid2206.151080>

after a series of outbreaks caused by newly emerging subtypes (9–12). Subclinical infection eludes symptomatic surveillance, and resulting illnesses thus manifest as sporadic disease. Social network analysis indicates that nearly one third of the attack rate for influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus in England was attributable to asymptomatic infection (13), a proportion mirrored by a recent review of volunteer challenge studies (14). Mathematical modeling studies designed to inform pandemic preparedness and vaccination thresholds and stockpiling strategies have typically had to resort to using these types of indirect metrics for parameterization (15–17). Current policy surrounding intervention planning for pandemic and inter-pandemic influenza is informed by estimates and simulations that arbitrarily assume a constant rate of asymptomatic infection in the range of 30%–50%.

However, mortality rates, clinical symptoms, and basic reproduction numbers (outbreak thresholds) vary greatly between influenza virus types, subtypes, and strains (18). Therefore, assigning an arbitrary value for asymptomatic infection rates that does not reflect this heterogeneity presents an important shortcoming in the current ability to accurately predict influenza outbreaks. Therefore, we conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis to determine the prevalence of asymptomatic influenza infection and to identify any factors associated with the heterogeneity reported across studies.

Methods

Search Strategy and Selection Criteria

A systematic review and meta-analysis was conducted in accordance with PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines (19). Literature searches were performed on the PubMed and Web of Science databases for the period from the inception of these databases to the beginning of 2015 to identify studies that reported laboratory-confirmed influenza infection (i.e., by culture, PCR, or serologic testing) and the proportion of symptomatic versus asymptomatic presentation. Search terms were chosen to ensure maximum coverage of possible literature and included the terms “influenza,”

“carrier,” “carriage,” “shedding,” “asymptomatic,” “influenza AND prophylaxis NOT vaccine” (filtered for randomized control trials), “influenza AND (travel OR migration OR immigra*) AND (screening OR test OR testing OR detection),” “subclinical,” “serosurvey OR seroprevalence OR seroepidemiology.” Other keywords and connectors were also used (online Technical Appendix 1, <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/EID/article/22/6/15-1080-Techapp1.pdf>).

To be eligible for inclusion, studies needed to 1) be peer-reviewed and 2) report the prevalence of asymptomatic influenza virus infections in humans or present the appropriate data from which that prevalence could be calculated. Laboratory confirmation of influenza was a requirement, and it had to be possible to correlate these data to the number of symptomatic patients. We did not impose limitations in terms of study design, influenza virus type, or exposure type (community or experimental inoculation). According to current World Health Organization guidelines, laboratory confirmation consisted of 1) conventional PCR (referred to here as PCR) or real-time reverse transcription PCR (rRT-PCR); 2) virus antigen detection by immunofluorescence or enzyme immunoassay methods; 3) serologic detection of antibodies (hemagglutination inhibition); or 4) virus culture (20). Studies were excluded when the use of antiviral agents without a placebo group was reported. In cases in which a placebo group was used and an asymptomatic proportion could be determined, only this subset was used; otherwise, the study was excluded. Results were restricted to studies published in English; however, no restriction was placed on the publication date of studies that fit these criteria.

Study Selection and Data Extraction

Two authors (L.F.-K. and M.C.) independently screened the publications for eligibility in a stepwise fashion. Search results were initially screened based on article titles and abstracts. Then, full-text analysis was performed to identify all studies which either reported asymptomatic prevalence or from which asymptomatic prevalence could be calculated. Any discrepancies that might have affected inclusion or exclusion of a study were resolved through discussion and consensus after independent evaluation by another author (L.Y.). The same 2 authors (L.F.-K. and M.C.) assessed the risk for bias of the studies included by using a modified version of the tool developed by Hoy et al. (21) for prevalence studies (online Technical Appendix 2, <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/EID/article/22/6/15-1080-Techapp2.pdf>).

The definitions of asymptomatic influenza infection varied considerably between studies. Definitions ranged from a total absence of symptoms to a lack of influenza-like illness (ILI) or acute respiratory illness (ARI). For the sake of clarity, we used the term “asymptomatic” when there was a total absence of symptoms and “subclinical” when the patient did not meet the authors’ criteria for ILI

or ARI. Asymptomatic influenza prevalence was considered to be the proportion of all persons with laboratory-confirmed influenza who had no symptoms, whereas subclinical influenza prevalence was the proportion of persons with laboratory-confirmed influenza who failed to meet the study’s definition of symptomatic infection. In addition to collecting data on asymptomatic and subclinical infection prevalence, we collected data on influenza virus type/subtype and study characteristics (e.g., study design, sample size, diagnostic test used to detect influenza virus infection, and the working definition of “symptomatic”).

Statistical Analysis

We used prevalence of asymptomatic versus subclinical carriers among persons with laboratory-confirmed influenza as primary endpoints of interest. We pooled the prevalence estimates of asymptomatic and subclinical influenza across studies by using 2 meta-analytical models, the inverse variance heterogeneity model (22) and the random effects model.

We observed considerable heterogeneity across studies. This heterogeneity was unlikely to be attributable only to random or systematic errors, and actual clinical heterogeneity was deemed to exist. Therefore, we created subgroups by influenza virus type/subtype with the aim of generating more homogeneous groups within which we could anticipate that the differences indeed reflected variability caused by random or systematic error rather than actual clinical heterogeneity. In addition, we built a linear model to examine the variance explained by the influenza virus type/subtype, laboratory test used to detect the virus, year of the study, and geographic location of the study to gain insight into the considerable heterogeneity observed in the prevalence of asymptomatic and subclinical infections. We conducted the meta-analyses by using MetaXL version 2.0 (EpiGear Int Pty Ltd, Brisbane, QLD, Australia), which also included the inverse variance heterogeneity method, and the generalized linear model by using Stata version 12 (StataCorp LP, College Station, TX, USA). All tests were 2-tailed, and a p value <0.05 was deemed statistically significant.

Results

Yield of Search Strategy

A total of 13,219 records were identified from literature searches of the 2 databases. This number was reduced to 9,900 after removal of publications that were either duplicates or not original research papers (e.g., review papers). An additional 3,663 papers were removed based on the title and 5,652 papers more based on the abstract. The full texts of the remaining 585 studies were examined, and 55 articles met the inclusion criteria and were included in the final analysis (Figure; online Technical Appendix 1).

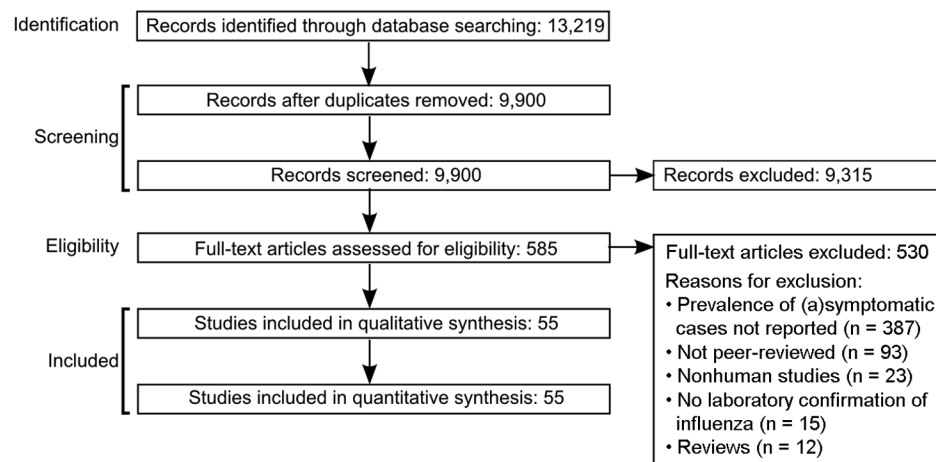


Figure. PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis) flowchart of literature search for systematic review and meta-analysis of asymptomatic and subclinical influenza infection prevalence.

Characteristics of the Studies Included

The 55 articles provided 59 data points because 4 papers reported the prevalence of asymptomatic and subclinical carriers for influenza A and B viruses separately. Overall, 19 studies (22 data points) defined asymptomatic infection as cases in persons lacking symptoms, and 44 studies (46 data points) reported subclinical influenza virus infections.

Infection was confirmed by serologic testing, rRT-PCR, or viral culture; 28 studies reported use of serologic testing alone to confirm infection, 18 used rRT-PCR alone, and the remaining 9 used a combination of methods (5 serologic testing and rRT-PCR, 3 serologic testing and culture, and 1 rRT-PCR and culture). Among the 55 studies, influenza A virus (predominantly H1N1) was the most common type of infection; 5 studies reported influenza B virus infections, and 1 study reported influenza C infections (online Technical Appendix 1 Table 2). Most studies reported on pandemic influenza virus types; 32 of these studies related to the 2009 pandemic influenza A/Mexico/4108/2009 strain. The risk for bias was moderate in 32% of the studies and low in the remaining 68%; no study was found to have a high risk for bias.

Quantitative Synthesis

The overall pooled prevalence for asymptomatic carriers was 19.1% (95% CI 5.2%–35.5%) for any type of influenza,

21.0% (95% CI 4.2%–41.0%) for influenza A, and 22.7% (95% CI 7.7%–39.8%) for influenza A(H1N1) (Table 1; online Technical Appendix 2 Figure 1). For subclinical carriers, the overall pooled prevalence was 43.4% (95% CI 25.4%–61.8%) for any type of influenza, 42.8% (95% CI 22.3%–63.9%) for influenza A, and 39.8% (95% CI 16.4%–64.5%) for influenza A(H1N1) (Table 1; online Technical Appendix 2 Figure 2). However, extensive heterogeneity was immediately evident for reported asymptomatic prevalence ($\tau^2 = 0.31$) and subclinical prevalence ($\tau^2 = 0.45$) that could not be explained by the influenza type/subtype alone. Similar results were obtained with the random effects model (online Technical Appendix 2 Figures 3, 4).

Investigation of Heterogeneity

The considerable heterogeneity observed within asymptomatic and subclinical influenza prevalence could not be explained by the type/subtype of influenza, the laboratory tests used to detect the virus, the location where the study was conducted, or the year of the study. The multivariate regression models could only explain 16.8% and 14.8% of the observed variance for the asymptomatic and subclinical prevalence, respectively. Influenza type/subtype as an independent predictor was found to account for almost the entire variance (16%) found for the prevalence of asymptomatic carriers (Table 2).

Table 1. Heterogeneity within asymptomatic and subclinical influenza infection cases, by virus type/subtype, as determined through a systematic review and meta-analysis of 55 studies

Type/subtype	Prevalence (95% CI)	Cochran's Q	p value (Cochran's Q)	I ² ,* %
Asymptomatic				
All types of influenza	19.1 (5.2–35.5)	752.40	<0.001	97
Influenza A	21.0 (4.2–41.0)	692.94	<0.001	98
Influenza A(H1N1)	22.7 (7.7–39.8)	561.14	<0.001	97
Subclinical				
All types of influenza	43.4 (25.4–61.8)	1768.24	<0.001	97
Influenza A	42.8 (22.3–63.9)	1689.78	<0.001	98
Influenza A(H1N1)	39.8 (16.4–64.5)	1388.54	<0.001	98

*The I² statistic describes the percentage of variation across studies that is attributable to heterogeneity rather than chance.

Table 2. Variance attributable to predictors in univariate and multivariate regression models for asymptomatic and subclinical influenza infection prevalence, by study characteristics, as determined through a systematic review and meta-analysis of 55 studies

Model/characteristic	Asymptomatic	Subclinical
Univariate model		
Influenza type/subtype	0.1599	0.0345
Laboratory test used to detect influenza	0.0043	0.0546
Hemisphere where study was conducted	0.0001	0.0159
Continent where study was conducted	0.0045	0.0213
Decade when study was conducted	*	0.0064
Multivariate model		
	0.1676†	0.1478‡

*Variance not reported because all the studies were from the same decade.
†Model adjusted for influenza type/subtype, laboratory test, and location (continent) of the study.
‡Model adjusted for influenza type/subtype, laboratory test, location (continent) of the study, and decade when the study was conducted.

Publication Bias

For both asymptomatic and subclinical carrier prevalence, the funnel plots showed no indication of publication bias. This result was confirmed by Doi plots (data not shown).

Discussion

Studies of laboratory-confirmed influenza typically do not include details of the symptomatic versus asymptomatic rate of infection. Of the few that do include this information, ambiguity exists between definitions of asymptomatic versus subclinical infections. This has perpetuated the ubiquitous issue of absent denominators in documented influenza rates and has caused substantial aberrations in initial reports of newly emerging subtypes and strains (23). We propose that the term “asymptomatic” be used exclusively to describe the complete absence of symptoms associated with influenza virus infection in patients with laboratory-confirmed cases. Given that reporting of this rate in the clinical literature would require little to no additional effort for most study designs, we also propose that the asymptomatic rate of laboratory test–positive persons be declared explicitly by public health bodies and researchers.

We found no evidence to support a fixed asymptomatic rate (or even an informative range) between or even within influenza virus subtypes. For example, the prevalence of asymptomatic influenza A(H1N1) virus ranged from 0% to 65%, resulting in an overall failure to explain the extreme heterogeneity in this reported rate. Some alternative explanations for the extreme heterogeneity are plausible, one being that generally applicable biologic mechanisms underlie the asymptomatic rates of influenza virus infection and these have been missed (e.g., details of patient vaccination or infection history were not routinely described in the clinical studies and data on sex and age of patients were excluded). Alternatively, influenza viruses conferring asymptomatic infection mutate so rapidly that a meaningful single per–influenza type rate simply does not exist. Employing sensitive diagnostic testing and standardized reporting of the asymptomatic rate of influenza virus infection would elucidate any underlying mechanisms or demonstrate any temporal changes in this rate.

This lack of a convenient asymptomatic rate poses a considerable obstacle to public health planning. Disease surveillance and control strategy is contingent on reliable estimates for the asymptomatic rate and the contribution that asymptomatic persons have on transmissibility. For example, a low asymptomatic rate improves the utility of passive (i.e., symptom-based) surveillance, whereas a higher asymptomatic rate might prompt presumptive travel restrictions to curb the spread of newly emerging subtypes and strains, especially if a high mortality rate is evident early in the outbreak. Future analyses correlating asymptomatic rates with mortality rates are also required; although one could easily speculate that influenza subtypes and strains eliciting high asymptomatic rates probably incur correspondingly low mortality rates, no evidence supporting this assumption currently exists.

Our study clearly demonstrates the inappropriateness of a one-size-fits-all approach to mitigating the spread of human influenza viruses. As new subtypes and strains emerge, actively surveying infection status of local populations and tracking any changes in asymptomatic rates of infection should increasingly become a global health priority, possibly necessitating the provision of international resources and the deployment of dedicated rapid-response teams who are guided by standardized protocols.

This work was supported by an Endeavour Postgraduate Scholarship (no. 3781_2014), an Australia National University Higher Degree Scholarship, and a Fondo para la Innovación, Ciencia, y Tecnología Scholarship (no. 095-FINCYT-BDE-2014) to L.F.K. The salary for G.J.M. was provided through the National Health and Medical Research Council, Australia (grant no. 1002608). The funders had no role in the conduct of the research.

Mr. Furuya-Kanamori is an infectious disease epidemiologist. He is enrolled in a PhD program at the Australian National University where he uses modern quantitative methods to better understand risk factors associated with different infectious diseases.

References

1. Taubenberger JK, Morens DM. The pathology of influenza virus infections. *Annu Rev Pathol.* 2008;3:499–522. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev.pathmechdis.3.121806.154316>

2. Cox NJ, Subbarao K. Influenza. *Lancet*. 1999;354:1277–82. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(99\)01241-6](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(99)01241-6)
3. Dawood FS, Iuliano AD, Reed C, Meltzer MI, Shay DK, Cheng P-Y, et al. Estimated global mortality associated with the first 12 months of 2009 pandemic influenza A H1N1 virus circulation: a modelling study. *Lancet Infect Dis*. 2012;12:687–95. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1473-3099\(12\)70121-4](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1473-3099(12)70121-4)
4. Lozano R, Naghavi M, Foreman K, Lim S, Shibuya K, Aboyans V, et al. Global and regional mortality from 235 causes of death for 20 age groups in 1990 and 2010: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2010. *Lancet*. 2012;380:2095–128. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(12\)61728-0](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(12)61728-0)
5. Murray CJL, Vos T, Lozano R, Naghavi M, Flaxman AD, Michaud C, et al. Disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) for 291 diseases and injuries in 21 regions, 1990–2010: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2010. *Lancet*. 2012;380:2197–223. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(12\)61689-4](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(12)61689-4)
6. Elder AG, O'Donnell B, McCrudden EA, Symington IS, Carman WF. Incidence and recall of influenza in a cohort of Glasgow healthcare workers during the 1993–4 epidemic: results of serum testing and questionnaire. *BMJ*. 1996;313:1241–2. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.313.7067.1241>
7. Mathews JD, McCaw CT, McVernon J, McBryde ES, McCaw JM. A biological model for influenza transmission: pandemic planning implications of asymptomatic infection and immunity. *PLoS One*. 2007;2:e1220. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0001220>
8. Halloran ME, Hayden FG, Yang Y, Longini IM Jr, Monto AS. Antiviral effects on influenza viral transmission and pathogenicity: observations from household-based trials. *Am J Epidemiol*. 2007;165:212–21. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/aje/kwj362>
9. Arden KE, Mackay IM. Avian influenza A (H7N9) virus: can it help us more objectively judge all respiratory viruses? *J Clin Virol*. 2013;58:338–9. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jcv.2013.05.015>
10. Le MQ, Horby P, Fox A, Nguyen HT, Le Nguyen HK, Hoang PM, et al. Subclinical avian influenza A(H5N1) virus infection in human, Vietnam. *Emerg Infect Dis*. 2013;19:1674–7. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3201/eid1910.130730>
11. Lo YC, Chen WC, Huang WT, Lin YC, Liu MC, Kuo HW, et al. Surveillance of avian influenza A(H7N9) virus infection in humans and detection of the first imported human case in Taiwan, 3 April to 10 May 2013. *Euro Surveill*. 2013;18:20479.
12. Song R, Pang X, Yang P, Shu Y, Zhang Y, Wang Q, et al. Surveillance of the first case of human avian influenza A (H7N9) virus in Beijing, China. *Infection*. 2014;42:127–33. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s15010-013-0533-9>
13. Van Kerckhove K, Hens N, Edmunds WJ, Eames KTD. The impact of illness on social networks: implications for transmission and control of influenza. *Am J Epidemiol*. 2013;178:1655–62. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/aje/kwt196>
14. Carrat F, Vergu E, Ferguson NM, Lemaître M, Cauchemez S, Leach S, et al. Time lines of infection and disease in human influenza: a review of volunteer challenge studies. *Am J Epidemiol*. 2008;167:775–85. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/aje/kwm375>
15. Longini IM Jr, Halloran ME, Nizam A, Yang Y. Containing pandemic influenza with antiviral agents. *Am J Epidemiol*. 2004;159:623–33. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/aje/kwh092>
16. Germann TC, Kadau K, Longini IM Jr, Macken CA. Mitigation strategies for pandemic influenza in the United States. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A*. 2006;103:5935–40. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0601266103>
17. Ferguson NM, Cummings DAT, Fraser C, Cajka JC, Cooley PC, Burke DS. Strategies for mitigating an influenza pandemic. *Nature*. 2006;442:448–52. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/nature04795>
18. Taubenberger JK, Morens DM. 1918 Influenza: the mother of all pandemics. *Emerg Infect Dis*. 2006;12:15–22. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3201/eid1209.05-0979>
19. Moher D, Liberati A, Tetzlaff J, Altman DG, Group P, PRISMA Group. Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses: the PRISMA statement. *PLoS Med*. 2009;6:e1000097. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1000097>
20. World Health Organization. WHO Global Epidemiological Surveillance Standards for Influenza. 2014 [cited January 2015]. http://www.who.int/entity/influenza/resources/documents/WHO_Epidemiological_Influenza_Surveillance_Standards_2014.pdf?ua=1
21. Hoy D, Brooks P, Woolf A, Blyth F, March L, Bain C, et al. Assessing risk of bias in prevalence studies: modification of an existing tool and evidence of interrater agreement. *J Clin Epidemiol*. 2012;65:934–9. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jclinepi.2011.11.014>
22. Doi SA, Barendregt JJ, Khan S, Thalib L, Williams GM. Advances in the meta-analysis of heterogeneous clinical trials I: The inverse variance heterogeneity model. *Contemp Clin Trials*. 2015;45(Pt A):130–8. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cct.2015.05.009>
23. Lambert SB, Faux CE, Grant KA, Williams SH, Bletchly C, Catton MG, et al. Influenza surveillance in Australia: we need to do more than count. *Med J Aust*. 2010;193:43–5.

Address for correspondence: Laith Jakob, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Department of Disease Control, Keppel St, London WC1E 7HT, UK; email: laith.yakob@lshtm.ac.uk

etymologia

Etymology is concerned with the origin of words, how they've evolved over time, and changed in

form and meaning as they were translated from one language to another. Every month, EID publishes a feature highlighting the etymology of a word

from medicine or public health.

featured monthly in

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/articles/etymologia>

**EMERGING
INFECTIOUS DISEASES™**

Heterogeneous and Dynamic Prevalence of Asymptomatic Influenza Virus Infections

Technical Appendix 1

Search Strategies

First Search

Influenza AND ((Asymptomatic OR Carrier OR carriage OR shedding OR symptomatic OR Subclinical OR serosurvey OR seroprevalence OR seroepidemiology) OR ((travel OR migration OR immigra*) AND (screening OR test OR testing OR detection)) OR ((“Cohort Studies”[Mesh] OR “Case-Control Studies”[Mesh]) AND “Influenza A virus”[Mesh]))

Second Search

(“influenza, human”[MeSH Terms] OR (“influenza”[All Fields] AND “human”[All Fields]) OR “human influenza”[All Fields] OR “influenza”[All Fields]) AND (“prevention and control”[Subheading] OR (“prevention”[All Fields] AND “control”[All Fields]) OR “prevention and control”[All Fields] OR “prophylaxis”[All Fields]) NOT (“vaccines”[MeSH Terms] OR “vaccines”[All Fields] OR “vaccine”[All Fields])

Manually filtered for randomized controlled trials.

Technical Appendix Table 1. Characteristics of the 55 studies included in systematic review and meta-analysis of asymptomatic and subclinical influenza infection prevalence

Authors, year	Location of the study	Influenza type or subtype	Seasonal / Pandemic	Exposure type	Diagnosis test	Definition of asymptomatic	Definition of subclinical	Asymptomatic prevalence, %	Subclinical prevalence, %
Aho M, et al., 2010	Finland	A (H1N1)	Pandemic	Military garrison	HI \geq 10	No symptoms of URT infection	—	40.7	—
Belderok SM, et al., 2013	Netherlands	A, and B	Seasonal	Travel to tropical and subtropical countries	HI \geq 40 and \geq 4-fold increase above pre-travel titer	—	No ILI	—	90.83
Bone A, et al., 2012	France	A (H1N1)	Pandemic	Community	HI \geq 40	—	No ILI	—	29.52
Buescher, et al., 1969	Thailand and Panama	A (H3N1)	Pandemic	Military garrison	HI \geq 32	—	No ILI	—	77.5
Carey DE, et al., 1958	USA	A (H2N2)	Pandemic	Parish	HI \geq 10	—	No 'flu'	—	24.77
Ceyhan M, et al., 2010	Turkey	A (H5N1)		Community, poultry exposure and healthcare workers	HI \geq 21	—	No symptoms of avian influenza infection	—	81.25
Clover RD, et al., 1986*	USA	A (H1N1)	Seasonal	Community	Positive culture or HI \geq 4-fold increase	—	No ILI	—	60
Cui F, et al., 2011	China	A (H1N1)	Pandemic	Train	rRT-PCR	—	No ARI	—	13.64
Dotan A, et al., 2014	Israel	A (H1N1)	Pandemic	Hospital	rRT-PCR	—	No URI	—	30.77
Du Ry van Beest Holle M, et al., 2005	Netherlands	A (H7N7)		Poultry	HI \geq 10	—	No ILI	—	93.94
Foy HM, et al., 1987	USA	B	Seasonal	Community	HI \geq 10	—	No ILI	—	32.43
Gray GC, et al., 2014	Cambodia	A (H1N1), A (H3N2), and B	Seasonal and pandemic	Community	HI \geq 4-fold increase	—	No ILI	—	64.44
Guinard A, et al., 2009	France	A (H1N1)	Pandemic	School	rRT-PCR	—	No ILI	—	53.33
Hayden FG, et al., 1999*	USA	A (H1N1)	Seasonal	Experimental inoculation	Positive culture and/or HI \geq 4-fold increase	—	No URT illness	—	46.15
Hayward AC, et al., 2014	UK	A (H1N1), A (H3N2), and B	Seasonal and pandemic	Community	rRT-PCR	—	No ILI	—	46.22
Hsieh YH, et al., 2014	Taiwan	A (H1N1)	Seasonal	Community and school	HI \geq 4-fold increase	No symptoms	No ILI	45.15	33.33
Hudson L, et al., 2013	New Zealand	A (H1N1)	Pandemic	Healthcare workers	HI \geq 40	None influenza symptoms	—	25.44	—
Ison MG, et al., 2012*	Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Spain, UK, USA	A (H1N1), A (H3N2), and B		Transplant recipients	Positive culture and/or HI \geq 4-fold increase	No symptoms	—	25	—
Jackson ML, et al., 2011	USA	A (H1N1)	Pandemic	School	HI \geq 20 and \geq 4-fold increase	No symptoms	No ILI	25	81.25

Authors, year	Location of the study	Influenza type or subtype	Seasonal / Pandemic	Exposure type	Diagnosis test	Definition of asymptomatic	Definition of subclinical	Asymptomatic prevalence, %	Subclinical prevalence, %
Jaeger JL, et al., 2011	USA	A (H1N1)	Pandemic	Hospital	HI ≥ 20	—	No ARI or ILI	—	66.66
Johnson S, et al., 2011	UK	A (H1N1)	Pandemic	Boarding school	HI ≥ 8	—	No ILI	—	68.35
Khakpour M, et al., 1969	Iran	A (H3N2)	Pandemic	Prisoners	HI	—	No ILI	—	23.53
Khaokham CB, et al., 2013	USA	A (H1N1)	Pandemic	Navy vessel	rRT-PCR or HI ≥ 4 -fold increase	No symptoms	No ILI	52.11	88.03
Khuntirat B, et al., 2014	Thailand	A (H1N1)	Pandemic	Community	rRT-PCR and HI ≥ 4 -fold increase	—	No ILI	—	83.33
Kumar S, et al., 2010	USA	A (H1N1)	Pandemic	Community	rRT-PCR	No symptoms	No ILI	10	32
Kumar S, et al., 2011	USA	A (H1N1)	Pandemic	Healthcare workers	HI ≥ 40	No symptoms	No ILI	35	30
Kuster SP, et al., 2013	Canada	A (H1N1)	Pandemic	Community and healthcare workers	HI ≥ 40	—	No ARI	—	13.04
Lau LLH, et al., 2010	Hong Kong	A (H1N1), A (H3N2), and B	Seasonal	Community	rRT-PCR	No symptoms	—	25.42	—
Levy JW, et al., 2013	Thailand	A (H1N1), A (H3N2), and B	Seasonal and pandemic	Community	rRT-PCR	No symptoms	—	2.54	—
Li T, et al., 2011	China	A (H1N1)	Pandemic	Boarding school	rRT-PCR and HI ≥ 40	No symptoms	—	30.89	—
Mikulska M, et al., 2013	Italy	A (H1N1), A (H3N2), and B	Seasonal	Allogeneic haematopoietic stem cell recipients	rRT-PCR	No symptoms	No ILI	10	45
Neatherlin J, et al., 2013	USA	A (H1N1)	Pandemic	Airplane	MN ≥ 40 and HI ≥ 20	—	No ARI/ILI	—	75
Oker-Blom N, et al., 1970*	Finland	A (H3N2)	Pandemic	Community	HI ≥ 4 -fold increase	—	No respiratory illness	—	18
Pang X, et al., 2011	China	A (H1N1)	Pandemic	Community	rRT-PCR	—	No ILI	—	4.62
Papenburg J, et al., 2010	Canada	A (H1N1)	Pandemic	Community	Microneutralization ≥ 40 or ≥ 4 -fold increase	No symptoms	—	9.43	—
Pascalis H, et al., 2012	Reunion Island	A (H1N1)	Pandemic	Community	rRT-PCR	No symptoms	No ILI	1.61	30.65
Pasco JA, et al., 2012	Australia	A (H1N1)	Pandemic	Community	HI ≥ 40	—	No ILI	—	75.97
Paton NI, et al., 2011*	Singapore	A (H1N1), A (H3N2), and B	Seasonal	Community	HI ≥ 4 -fold increase	—	No clinical influenza (ILI)	—	51.72
Priest PC, et al., 2013	New Zealand	A, and B	Seasonal	Airport	rRT-PCR	No symptoms	—	6.67	—
Qi W, et al., 2014	China	A (H10N8)	Pandemic	Poultry exposure	HI ≥ 20	—	No influenza symptoms	—	100
Redlberger-Fritz M, et al., 2014	Austria	A (H1N1)	Pandemic	Attended hospital	rRT-PCR	—	No respiratory symptoms	—	60.72

Authors, year	Location of the study	Influenza type or subtype	Seasonal / Pandemic	Exposure type	Diagnosis test	Definition of asymptomatic	Definition of subclinical	Asymptomatic prevalence, %	Subclinical prevalence, %
Robinson JL, et al., 2007	Canada	A (H3N2)		Community	HI ≥ 32	—	No ILI	—	77.78
Salez N, et al., 2014	France, Reunion Island, UK	C		Community	HI, ELISA and rRT-PCR	—	No ILI	—	50
Shafir SC, et al., 2011	USA	A (H1N1)		University campus	HI ≥ 40	—	No ILI	—	54.43
Shankar AG, et al., 2014	UK	A (H1N1)	Pandemic	Airplane	rRT-PCR	—	No ILI	—	0
Smit PM, et al., 2012	Netherlands	A (H1N1)	Seasonal	Healthcare workers	rRT-PCR	—	No ILI	—	0
Sridhar S, et al., 2014	UK	A (H1N1)	Pandemic	Community	HI ≥ 32	—	No ILI	—	84.15
Suess T, et al., 2012	Germany	A (H1N1), A (H3N2), and B	Seasonal and pandemic	Community	rRT-PCR	No symptoms	No ILI	4.76	17.99
Thai PQ, et al., 2014	Vietnam	A (H1N1)	Pandemic	Community	rRT-PCR	No symptoms	—	45.45	—
Toyokawa T, et al., 2011	Japan	A (H1N1)	Pandemic	Healthcare workers	HI ≥ 40	—	No fever	—	92.86
Vilella A, et al., 2012	Dominican Republic	A (H1N1)	Pandemic	Community	rRT-PCR	No symptoms	—	5.13	—
Wang TE, et al., 2010	Taiwan	A (H1N1), A (H3N2)	Seasonal	School	HI ≥ 4 -fold increase	No symptoms	—	62.5	—
Woods CW, et al., 2013	USA and UK	A (H1N1), A (H3N2)	Seasonal	Experimental inoculation	Positive culture or rRT-PCR	—	Jackson score < 6	—	56.1
Yan L, et al., 2012	China	A (H1N1)	Pandemic	School	rRT-PCR or HI ≥ 40	—	No ARI	—	64.49
Zaman M, et al., 2011	Pakistan	A (H5N1)	Pandemic	Hospital	rRT-PCR	No symptoms	—	25	—

*Only control or placebo group included; ARI, acute respiratory illness; HI, hemagglutination inhibition; ILI, influenza-like illness; LRT, lower respiratory tract; rRT-PCR, real-time reverse transcription PCR; URT, upper respiratory tract.

Technical Appendix 2 Table. Included studies (N = 55), by influenza type/subtype

Type	Subtype	No. of studies	References
A	H10N8	1	1
	H7N7	1	2
	H5N1	2	3,4
	H3N2	11	5–15
	H2N2	1	16
	H1N1	38	5,8,9,12–15,17–47
B		5	5,8,12,48,49
C		1	50
Mixed		6	49,51–55

References

1. Qi W, Su S, Xiao C, Zhou P, Li H, Ke C, et al. Antibodies against H10N8 avian influenza virus among animal workers in Guangdong Province before November 30, 2013, when the first human H10N8 case was recognized. *BMC Med.* 2014;12:205. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/s12916-014-0205-3](http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/s12916-014-0205-3)
2. Du Ry van Beest Holle M, Meijer A, Koopmans M, de Jager CM. Human-to-human transmission of avian influenza A/H7N7, The Netherlands, 2003. *Euro Surveill.* 2005;10:264–8. [PubMed](http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/s12916-014-0205-3)
3. Ceyhan M, Yildirim I, Ferraris O, Bouscambert-Duchamp M, Frobert E, Uyar N, et al. Serosurveillance study on transmission of H5N1 virus during a 2006 avian influenza epidemic. *Epidemiol Infect.* 2010;138:1274–80. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S095026880999166X](http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S095026880999166X)
4. Zaman M, Ashraf S, Dreyer NA, Toovey S. Human infection with avian influenza virus, Pakistan, 2007. *Emerg Infect Dis.* 2011;17:1056–9. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.3201/eid1706.091652](http://dx.doi.org/10.3201/eid1706.091652)
5. Belderok SM, Rimmelzwaan GF, van den Hoek A, Sonder GJ. Effect of travel on influenza epidemiology. *Emerg Infect Dis.* 2013;19:925–31. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.3201/eid1906.111864](http://dx.doi.org/10.3201/eid1906.111864)
6. Buescher EL, Smith TJ, Zachary IH. Experience with Hong Kong influenza in tropical areas. *Bull World Health Organ.* 1969;41:387–91. [PubMed](http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.4.5677.208)
7. Khakpour M, Saidi A, Naficy K. Proved viraemia in Asian influenza (Hong Kong variant) during incubation period. *BMJ.* 1969;4:208–9. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.4.5677.208](http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.4.5677.208)
8. Levy JW, Cowling BJ, Simmerman JM, Olsen SJ, Fang VJ, Suntarattiwong P, et al. The serial intervals of seasonal and pandemic influenza viruses in households in Bangkok, Thailand. *Am J Epidemiol.* 2013;177:1443–51. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/aje/kws402](http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/aje/kws402)

9. Neatherlin J, Cramer EH, Dubray C, Marienau KJ, Russell M, Sun H, et al. Influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 during air travel. *Travel Med Infect Dis*. 2013;11:110–8. [PubMed](#)
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tmaid.2013.02.004>
10. Oker-Blom N, Hovi T, Leinikki P, Palosuo T, Pettersson R, Suni J. Protection of man from natural infection with influenza A2 Hong Kong virus by amantadine: a controlled field trial. *BMJ*. 1970;3:676–8. [PubMed](#) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.3.5724.676>
11. Robinson JL, Lee BE, Patel J, Bastien N, Grimsrud K, Seal RF, et al. Swine influenza (H3N2) infection in a child and possible community transmission, Canada. *Emerg Infect Dis*. 2007;13:1865–70. [PubMed](#) <http://dx.doi.org/10.3201/eid1312.070615>
12. Suess T, Remschmidt C, Schink SB, Schweiger B, Heider A, Milde J, et al. Comparison of shedding characteristics of seasonal influenza virus (sub)types and influenza A(H1N1)pdm09; Germany, 2007-2011. *PLoS One*. 2012;7:e51653. [PubMed](#) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0051653>
13. Wang TE, Lin CY, King CC, Lee WC. Estimating pathogen-specific asymptomatic ratios. *Epidemiology*. 2010;21:726–8. [PubMed](#) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1097/EDE.0b013e3181e94274>
14. Woods CW, McClain MT, Chen M, Zaas AK, Nicholson BP, Varkey J, et al. A host transcriptional signature for presymptomatic detection of infection in humans exposed to influenza H1N1 or H3N2. *PLoS One*. 2013;8:e52198. [PubMed](#) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0052198>
15. Gray GC, Krueger WS, Chum C, Putnam SD, Wierzba TF, Heil GL, et al. Little evidence of subclinical avian influenza virus infections among rural villagers in Cambodia. *PLoS One*. 2014;9:e97097. [PubMed](#) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0097097>
16. Carey DE, Dunn FL, Robinson RQ, Jensen KE, Martin JD. Community-wide epidemic of Asian strain influenza; clinical and subclinical illnesses among school children. *J Am Med Assoc*. 1958;167:1459–63. [PubMed](#) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1001/jama.1958.02990290013004>
17. Aho M, Lyytikäinen O, Nyholm JE, Kuitunen T, Rönkkö E, Santanen R, et al. Outbreak of 2009 pandemic influenza A(H1N1) in a Finnish garrison—a serological survey. *Euro Surveill*. 2010;15:19709. [PubMed](#)
18. Bone A, Guthmann JP, Assal A, Rousset D, Degeorges A, Morel P, et al. Incidence of H1N1 2009 virus infection through the analysis of paired plasma specimens among blood donors, France. *PLoS One*. 2012;7:e33056. [PubMed](#) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0033056>
19. Clover RD, Crawford SA, Abell TD, Ramsey CN Jr, Glezen WP, Couch RB. Effectiveness of rimantadine prophylaxis of children within families. *Am J Dis Child*. 1986;140:706–9. [PubMed](#)

20. Cui F, Luo H, Zhou L, Yin D, Zheng C, Wang D, et al. Transmission of pandemic influenza A (H1N1) virus in a train in China. *J Epidemiol.* 2011;21:271–7. [PubMed](#)
<http://dx.doi.org/10.2188/jea.JE20100119>
21. Guinard A, Grout L, Durand C, Schwoebel V. Outbreak of influenza A(H1N1)v without travel history in a school in the Toulouse district, France, June 2009. *Euro Surveill.* 2009;14:19265. [PubMed](#)
22. Hayden FG, Treanor JJ, Fritz RS, Lobo M, Betts RF, Miller M, et al. Use of the oral neuraminidase inhibitor oseltamivir in experimental human influenza: randomized controlled trials for prevention and treatment. *JAMA.* 1999;282:1240–6. [PubMed](#)
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1001/jama.282.13.1240>
23. Hudson B, Toop L, Mangin D, Brunton C, Jennings L, Fletcher L. Pandemic influenza A(H1N1)pdm09: risk of infection in primary healthcare workers. *Br J Gen Pract.* 2013;63:e416–22. [PubMed](#) <http://dx.doi.org/10.3399/bjgp13X668212>
24. Jackson ML, France AM, Hancock K, Lu X, Veguilla V, Sun H, et al. Serologically confirmed household transmission of 2009 pandemic influenza A (H1N1) virus during the first pandemic wave—New York City, April-May 2009. *Clin Infect Dis.* 2011;53:455–62. [PubMed](#)
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/cid/cir437>
25. Jaeger JL, Patel M, Dharan N, Hancock K, Meites E, Mattson C, et al. Transmission of 2009 pandemic influenza A (H1N1) virus among healthcare personnel—Southern California, 2009. *Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol.* 2011;32:1149–57. [PubMed](#) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/662709>
26. Johnson S, Ihekweazu C, Hardelid P, Raphaely N, Hoschler K, Bermingham A, et al. Seroepidemiologic study of pandemic (H1N1) 2009 during outbreak in boarding school, England. *Emerg Infect Dis.* 2011;17:1670–7. [PubMed](#) <http://dx.doi.org/10.3201/eid1709.100761>
27. Khaokham CB, Selent M, Loustalot FV, Zarecki SM, Harrington D, Hoke E, et al. Seroepidemiologic investigation of an outbreak of pandemic influenza A H1N1 2009 aboard a US Navy vessel—San Diego, 2009. *Influenza Other Respi Viruses.* 2013;7:791–8. [PubMed](#)
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/irv.12100>
28. Kumar S, Chusid MJ, Willoughby RE, Havens PL, Kehl SC, Ledebner NA, et al. Epidemiologic Observations from Passive and Targeted Surveillance during the First Wave of the 2009 H1N1 Influenza Pandemic in Milwaukee, WI. *Viruses.* 2010;2:782–95. [PubMed](#)
<http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/v2040782>

29. Kumar S, Fan J, Melzer-Lange M, Trost J, Havens PL, Willoughby RE, et al. H1N1 hemagglutinin-inhibition seroprevalence in Emergency Department Health Care workers after the first wave of the 2009 influenza pandemic. *Pediatr Emerg Care*. 2011;27:804–7. [PubMed](#)
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1097/PEC.0b013e31822c125e>
30. Kuster SP, Coleman BL, Raboud J, McNeil S, De Serres G, Gubbay J, et al.; Working Adult Influenza Cohort Study Group. Risk factors for influenza among health care workers during 2009 pandemic, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. *Emerg Infect Dis*. 2013;19:606–15. [PubMed](#)
<http://dx.doi.org/10.3201/eid1904.111812>
31. Li T, Liu Y, Di B, Wang M, Shen J, Zhang Y, et al. Epidemiological investigation of an outbreak of pandemic influenza A (H1N1) 2009 in a boarding school: serological analysis of 1570 cases. *J Clin Virol*. 2011;50:235–9. [PubMed](#) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jcv.2010.11.012>
32. Pang X, Yang P, Li S, Zhang L, Tian L, Li Y, et al. Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 among quarantined close contacts, Beijing, People’s Republic of China. *Emerg Infect Dis*. 2011;17:1824–30. [PubMed](#)
<http://dx.doi.org/10.3201/eid1710.101344>
33. Papenburg J, Baz M, Hamelin MÈ, Rhéaume C, Carbonneau J, Ouakki M, et al. Household transmission of the 2009 pandemic A/H1N1 influenza virus: elevated laboratory-confirmed secondary attack rates and evidence of asymptomatic infections. *Clin Infect Dis*. 2010;51:1033–41. [PubMed](#) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/656582>
34. Pascalis H, Temmam S, Turpin M, Rollot O, Flahault A, Carrat F, et al. Intense co-circulation of non-influenza respiratory viruses during the first wave of pandemic influenza pH1N1/2009: a cohort study in Reunion Island. *PLoS One*. 2012;7:e44755. [PubMed](#)
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0044755>
35. Pasco JA, Nicholson GC, Brennan SL, Bennett KE, Dobbins AG, Athan E. The epidemiology of the first wave of H1N1 influenza pandemic in Australia: a population-based study. *Open Public Health J*. 2012;5:80–5. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2174/1874944501205010080>
36. Shafir SC, O’Keefe KA, Shoaf KI. Evaluation of the seroprevalence of influenza A(H1N1) 2009 on a university campus: a cross-sectional study. *BMC Public Health*. 2011;11:922. [PubMed](#)
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-11-922>
37. Smit PM, Mulder JW, Ahdi M, Gerritsen R, Darma S, Smits PH, et al. Low attack rate of novel influenza A (H1N1) virus infection among healthcare workers: a prospective study in a setting

- with an elaborated containment plan. *Int Arch Occup Environ Health*. 2012;85:163–70. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s00420-011-0652-5](http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s00420-011-0652-5)
38. Toyokawa T, Sunagawa T, Yahata Y, Ohyama T, Kodama T, Satoh H, et al. Seroprevalence of antibodies to pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza virus among health care workers in two general hospitals after first outbreak in Kobe, Japan. *J Infect*. 2011;63:281–7. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jinf.2011.05.001](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jinf.2011.05.001)
39. Vilella A, Serrano B, Marcos MA, Serradesanferm A, Mensa J, Hayes E, et al. Pandemic influenza A(H1N1) outbreak among a group of medical students who traveled to the Dominican Republic. *J Travel Med*. 2012;19:9–14. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1708-8305.2011.00580.x](http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1708-8305.2011.00580.x)
40. Yan L, Gao Y, Zhang Y, Tildesley M, Liu L, Zhang Y, et al. Epidemiological and virological characteristics of pandemic influenza A (H1N1) school outbreaks in China in 2009. *PLoS One*. 2012;7:e45898. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0045898](http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0045898)
41. Dotan A, Ben-Shimol S, Fruchtman Y, Avni-Shemer Y, Kapelushnik J, Ben-Harush M, et al. Influenza A/H1N1 in pediatric oncology patients. *J Pediatr Hematol Oncol*. 2014;36:e271–4. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.1097/MPH.0000000000000043](http://dx.doi.org/10.1097/MPH.0000000000000043)
42. Hsieh YH, Tsai CA, Lin CY, Chen JH, King CC, Chao DY, et al.; CIDER Research Team. Asymptomatic ratio for seasonal H1N1 influenza infection among schoolchildren in Taiwan. *BMC Infect Dis*. 2014;14:80. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/1471-2334-14-80](http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/1471-2334-14-80)
43. Khuntirat B, Yoon IK, Chittaganpitch M, Krueger WS, Supawat K, Blair PJ, et al. High rate of A(H1N1)pdm09 infections among rural Thai villagers, 2009–2010. *PLoS One*. 2014;9:e106751. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0106751](http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0106751)
44. Thai PQ, Mai Q, Welkers MRA, Hang NK, Thanh T, Dung VT, et al. Pandemic H1N1 virus transmission and shedding dynamics in index case households of a prospective Vietnamese cohort. *J Infect*. 2014;68:581–90. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jinf.2014.01.008](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jinf.2014.01.008)
45. Redlberger-Fritz M, Hirk S, Buchinger D, Haberl R, Hell M, Perkmann-Nagele N, et al. Distinct differences in clinical manifestation and viral laboratory parameters between children and adults with influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 infection—a retrospective comparative analysis. *J Med Virol*. 2014;86:1048–55. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jmv.23912](http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jmv.23912)
46. Shankar AG, Janmohamed K, Olowokure B, Smith GE, Hogan AH, De Souza V, et al. Contact tracing for influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus-infected passenger on international flight. *Emerg Infect Dis*. 2014;20:118–20. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.3201/eid2001.120101](http://dx.doi.org/10.3201/eid2001.120101)

47. Sridhar S, Begom S, Bermingham A, Hoschler K, Adamson W, Carman W, et al. Incidence of influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 infection, United Kingdom, 2009-2011. *Emerg Infect Dis.* 2013;19:1866–9. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.3201/eid1911.130295](http://dx.doi.org/10.3201/eid1911.130295)
48. Foy HM, Cooney MK, Allan ID, Albrecht JK. Influenza B in households: virus shedding without symptoms or antibody response. *Am J Epidemiol.* 1987;126:506–15. [PubMed](#)
49. Lau LL, Cowling BJ, Fang VJ, Chan KH, Lau EH, Lipsitch M, et al. Viral shedding and clinical illness in naturally acquired influenza virus infections. *J Infect Dis.* 2010;201:1509–16. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/652241](http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/652241)
50. Salez N, Mélade J, Pascalis H, Aherfi S, Dellagi K, Charrel RN, et al. Influenza C virus high seroprevalence rates observed in 3 different population groups. *J Infect.* 2014;69:182–9. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jinf.2014.03.016](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jinf.2014.03.016)
51. Ison MG, Szakaly P, Shapira MY, Kriván G, Nist A, Dutkowski R. Efficacy and safety of oral oseltamivir for influenza prophylaxis in transplant recipients. *Antivir Ther.* 2012;17:955–64. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.3851/IMP2192](http://dx.doi.org/10.3851/IMP2192)
52. Mikulska M, Del Bono V, Gandolfo N, Dini S, Dominietto A, Di Grazia C, et al. Epidemiology of viral respiratory tract infections in an outpatient haematology facility. *Ann Hematol.* 2014;93:669–76. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s00277-013-1912-0](http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s00277-013-1912-0)
53. Paton NI, Lee L, Xu Y, Ooi EE, Cheung YB, Archuleta S, et al. Chloroquine for influenza prevention: a randomised, double-blind, placebo controlled trial. *Lancet Infect Dis.* 2011;11:677–83. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1473-3099\(11\)70065-2](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1473-3099(11)70065-2)
54. Priest PC, Jennings LC, Duncan AR, Brunton CR, Baker MG. Effectiveness of border screening for detecting influenza in arriving airline travelers. *Am J Public Health.* 2013;103:1412–8. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2012.300761](http://dx.doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2012.300761)
55. Hayward AC, Fragaszy EB, Bermingham A, Wang L, Copas A, Edmunds WJ, et al.; Flu Watch Group. Comparative community burden and severity of seasonal and pandemic influenza: results of the Flu Watch cohort study. *Lancet Respir Med.* 2014;2:445–54. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S2213-2600\(14\)70034-7](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S2213-2600(14)70034-7)

Heterogeneous and Dynamic Prevalence of Asymptomatic Influenza Virus Infections

Technical Appendix 2

Risk for Bias Assessment

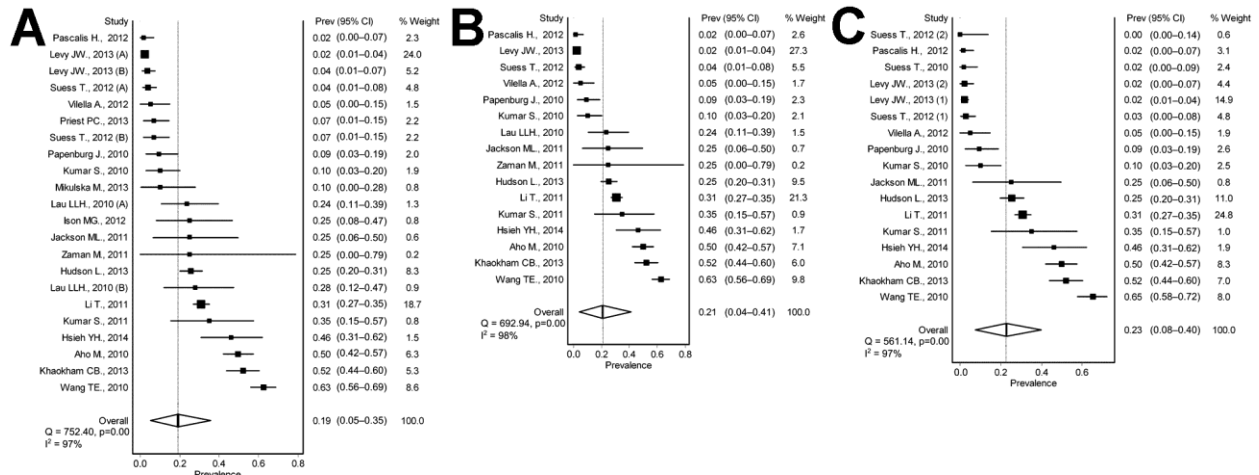
Risk for bias of the studies was assessed by using a modified version of the tool developed by Hoy et al. for prevalence studies. The modified tool assessed the external and internal validity of the studies by 9 criteria: 1) the targeted population was a close representation of the national population; 2) the sampling frame was a true or close representation of the general population; 3) random selection was used to select the study population; 4) the likelihood of nonresponse bias was minimal; 5) the case definition of influenza infection was based on laboratory tests; 6) the data collected were reliable; 7) the method used to collect the data was the same for all subjects; 8) the numerator and denominator of the prevalence were based on all the study participants; and 9) the data were largely recorded directly from the participants.

Statistical Analysis

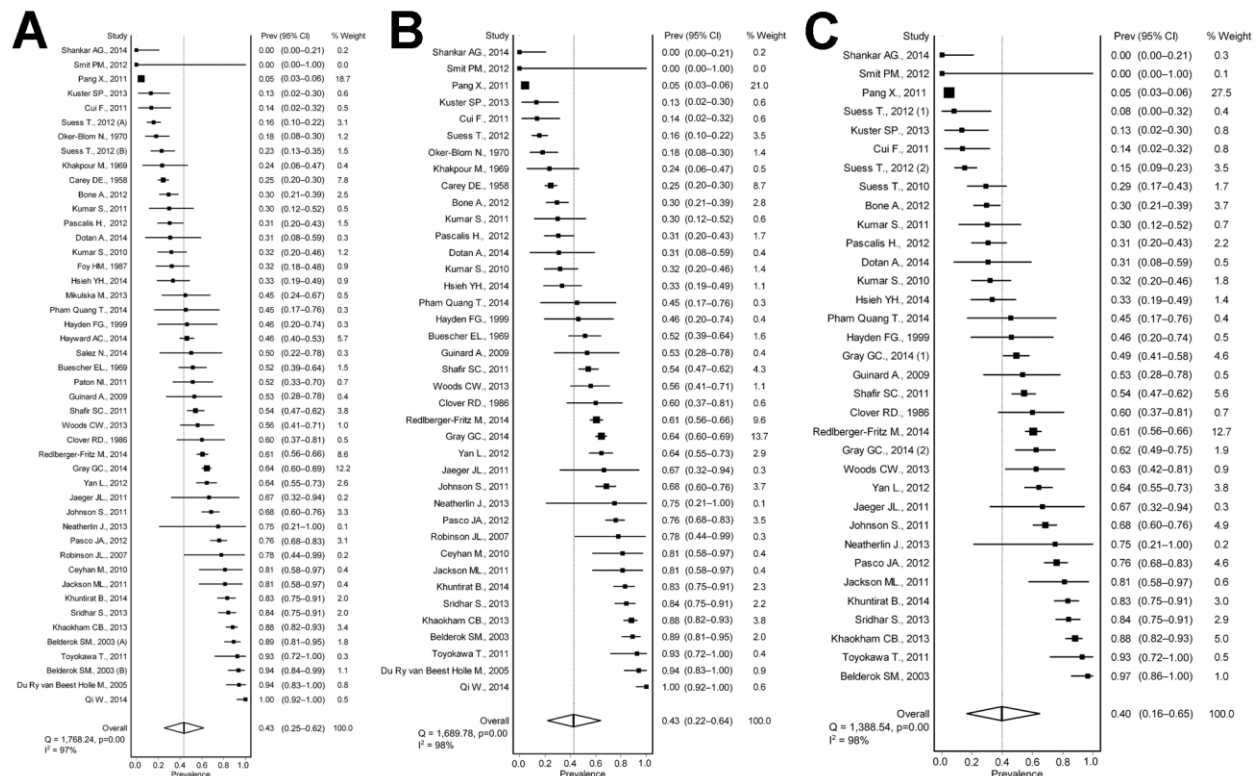
All prevalence estimates were pooled after double arcsine square root transformation and back-transformed for reporting (1). We did not use the standard random effects (RE) model (2) to pool because the latter is known to underestimate the statistical error and exacerbate publication bias (3–5). Therefore, the prevalence rates of asymptomatic and subclinical influenza across studies within the subgroups were pooled using the inverse variance heterogeneity (IVhet) model (6). This method uses a quasi-likelihood based variance structure without distributional assumptions and thus has coverage probabilities for the CI well within the 95% nominal level and has been documented to have better performance (lower mean squared error) when compared to the RE method (7). The results from the RE model have nevertheless been reported (Technical Appendix 2 Figures 3 and 4) for comparison purposes. Publication bias was assessed through Egger's linear regression and visual inspection of funnel and Doi plots (8).

References

1. Barendregt JJ, Doi SA, Lee YY, Norman RE, Vos T. Meta-analysis of prevalence. *J Epidemiol Community Health*. 2013;67:974–8. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/jech-2013-203104](http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/jech-2013-203104)
2. DerSimonian R, Laird N. Meta-analysis in clinical trials. *Control Clin Trials*. 1986;7:177–88. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0197-2456\(86\)90046-2](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0197-2456(86)90046-2)
3. Noma H. Confidence intervals for a random-effects meta-analysis based on Bartlett-type corrections. *Stat Med*. 2011;30:3304–12. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/sim.4350](http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/sim.4350)
4. Senn S. Trying to be precise about vagueness. *Stat Med*. 2007;26:1417–30. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/sim.2639](http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/sim.2639)
5. Poole C, Greenland S. Random-effects meta-analyses are not always conservative. *Am J Epidemiol*. 1999;150:469–75. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.aje.a010035](http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.aje.a010035)
6. Doi SA, Barendregt JJ, Khan S, Thalib L, Williams GM. Advances in the meta-analysis of heterogeneous clinical trials I: The inverse variance heterogeneity model. *Contemp Clin Trials*. 2015;45(Pt A):130–8. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cct.2015.05.009](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cct.2015.05.009)
7. Doi SA, Barendregt JJ, Khan S, Thalib L, Williams GM. Simulation comparison of the quality effects and random effects methods of meta-analysis. *Epidemiology*. 2015;26:e42–4. [PubMed http://dx.doi.org/10.1097/EDE.0000000000000289](http://dx.doi.org/10.1097/EDE.0000000000000289)
8. Onitilo AA, Doi SAR, Barendregt JJ. Meta-analysis II: interpretation and use of outputs. In: Doi SAR, Williams GM, editors. *Methods of clinical epidemiology*. New York: Springer; 2013.

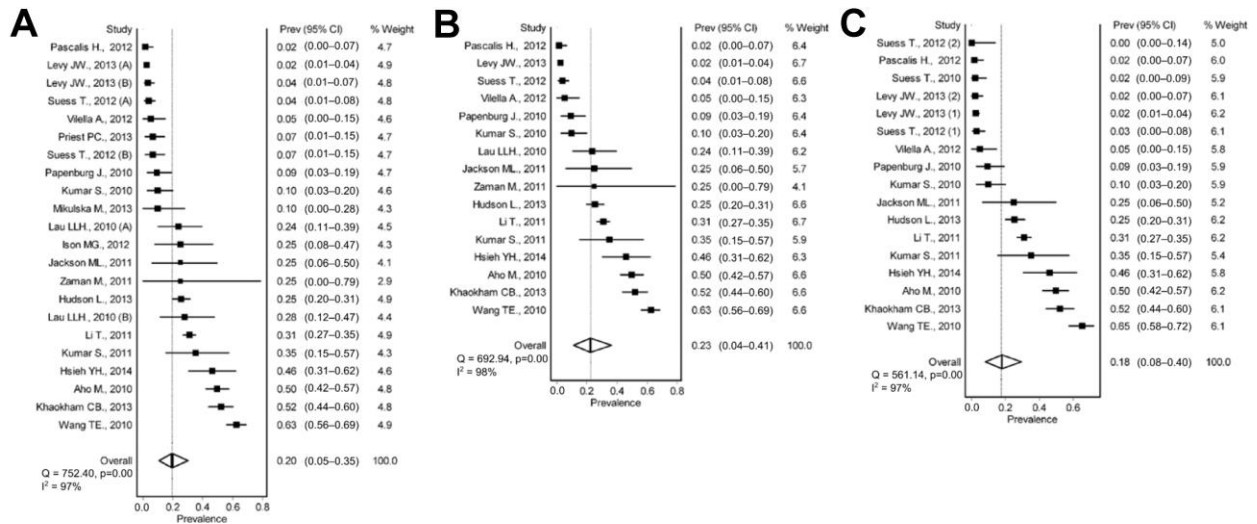


Technical Appendix 2 Figure 1. Forest plots for asymptomatic prevalence of A) influenza overall, B) influenza A, and C) influenza A(H1N1) virus infections generated by using the inverse variance heterogeneity model for 55 studies included in systematic review and meta-analysis of asymptomatic and subclinical influenza infection prevalence. Details on these studies are provided in Technical Appendix 1 (<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/EID/article/22/6/15-1080-Techapp1.pdf>).

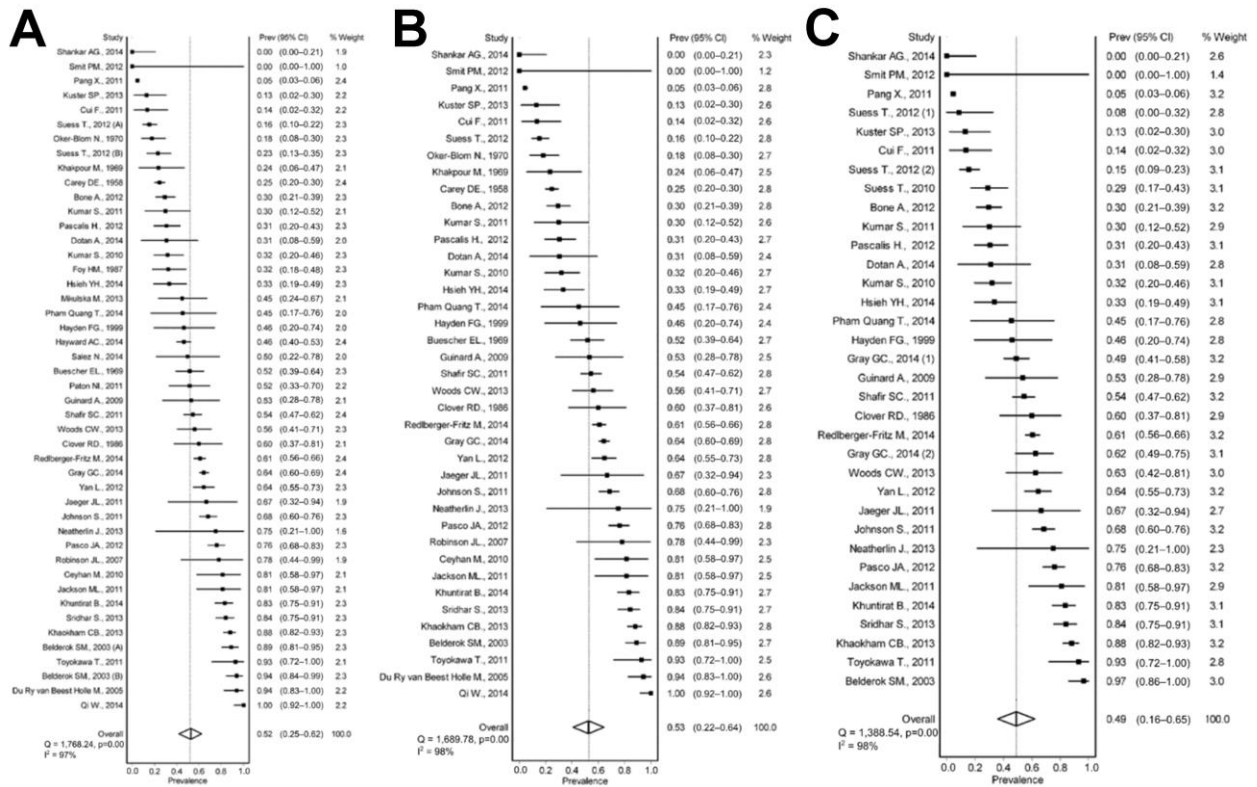


Technical Appendix 2 Figure 2. Forest plots for subclinical prevalence of A) influenza overall, B) influenza A, and C) influenza A(H1N1) virus infections generated by using the inverse variance

heterogeneity model for 55 studies included in systematic review and meta-analysis of asymptomatic and subclinical influenza infection prevalence.



Technical Appendix 2 Figure 3. Forest plots for asymptomatic prevalence of A) influenza overall, B) influenza A, and C) influenza A(H1N1) virus infections generated by using the random effects model for 55 studies included in systematic review and meta-analysis of asymptomatic and subclinical influenza infection prevalence.



Technical Appendix 2 Figure 4. Forest plots for subclinical prevalence of A) influenza overall, B) influenza A, and C) influenza A(H1N1) virus infections generated by using the random effects model for 55 studies included in systematic review and meta-analysis of asymptomatic and subclinical influenza infection prevalence.