

A Collection of Scientific Reports

International Symposium on Neglected Influenza Viruses February 3–5, 2010, Amelia Island, FL, USA

During an April 2009 teleconference of ISIRV's board, an idea was pitched for a meeting to examine what we know about influenza viruses found in pigs, horses, dogs, and marine mammals. The meeting concept was well received and gained traction when coincidentally the pandemic swine-like H1N1 virus emerged in humans and was a timely reminder of the importance of holding such a scientific meeting.

During the fall of 2009, a scientific committee was formed to plan the meeting, and during planning sessions, Dr. John Wood proposed the title 'Neglected Influenza Viruses'. Sponsorship for the meetings was generously provided by Intervet/Schering-Plough Animal Health, Pfizer Animal Health, Diatherix, and Virostat. After much rapid preparatory work by the Committee and meeting facilitators from Integress, 110 scientists from 13 countries gathered in Amelia Island, Florida during February 3–5, 2010 for this ISIRV-sponsored Symposium. The program can be reviewed on the ISIRV web site (<http://www.isirv.org>).

Participants reflected long upon these neglected influenza viruses. They examined surveillance data, experimental and observational research data, control strategies and policy, and the economic impact of these viruses. The sharing of historical, observational, and experimental data regarding these viruses was very illuminating. Particularly, intriguing was the evidence that these viruses, especially equine viruses, may have previously played important roles in influenza A pandemics in humans and may again do so in

the future. The viruses' economic impact was astonishing with estimates of monetary loss that would rival many countries public health budgets.

In 2009, while our eyes were largely focused on avian virus pandemic threats, a swine-like virus caught us unaware, rapidly spread worldwide among humans, often infected animals, causing thousands of human deaths and circumventing most every effort of pandemic virus control. We were very fortunate that this virus was not very virulent.

In this special issue of the journal, a number of participants from the *International Symposium on Neglected Influenza Viruses* have reported their research and observations concerning viruses often first seen in pigs, horses, dogs, and marine mammals. From where will the next pandemic virus arise? No one can say with any certainty. However, these reports remind us that we must invest in surveillance and research in the neglected influenza viruses lest we again be caught unaware and humans and animals suffer even graver morbidity and mortality.

To have an impact, this surveillance and research will require unprecedented cooperation between public health, veterinary medicine, agricultural and wildlife organizations. Movements toward such cooperation are just beginning through efforts like the One Health or One Medicine initiatives. Toward these purposes, we look forward to a 2nd Neglected Influenza Viruses ISIRV-sponsored meeting in early part of 2012 and ultimately to a time when the term 'neglected' is needed no more.

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