

October
2010

TARRANT VIRAL WATCH

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TARRANT News



Our office has moved! Please note our new address below. Phone and fax numbers have not changed.

The summer has been quiet, with very few swabs positive for influenza. Some other respiratory viruses have been identified, but overall respiratory infections have been minimal in Alberta. However, the Southern hemisphere is having a relatively normal influenza season.

We are interested to see what the fall will bring for influenza and other respiratory viruses. Thank-you for your continued contribution to this important surveillance program. **Don't forget to swab every patient with ILI you see using our new pink requisitions!**

Save the Date!

For those of you who are planning to attend the Family Medicine Forum in Vancouver this October, you are invited to a special reception for sentinels. It will be held following the presentation by Dr. Jim Dickinson & Dr. Danuta Skowronski entitled "2009 Influenza Pandemic: all that it was cracked up to be?" At the reception, you will receive up-to-date information about influenza surveillance and current research activities. This will be a great opportunity to meet fellow sentinels from Alberta and other provinces!

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2010-11 Vaccine Effectiveness Study Update

The new year for the Vaccine Effectiveness Study begins on October 1, 2010. If you collect data for the vaccine effectiveness study, you will soon be receiving new forms and swab kits.

When you receive the new PINK colored forms, please discard the old forms immediately.

This year, we will not be compensating for any old forms received. Last years' forms included information for the pandemic influenza

strain, therefore the information collected on the old forms is not relevant to this new influenza season. You may use swab kits from last year, but please ensure that they have not expired.

Please ensure you are filling in your TARRANT and Vaccine Effectiveness study forms completely! Both the requisition and the specimen must have the patient information with at least two unique identifiers (eg name and PHN).

Welcome

Dr. Sher Clain has joined our team as Assistant Director of Tarrant Viral Watch. Dr. Clain has worked in Nova Scotia for the past 11 years as a family physician in her own practice, as a hospitalist, and as an urgent care physician. Her recent move to Calgary with her family will allow her to pursue her long standing interest in public health.

Craig Pearce, one of the Tarrant research assistants, has left Tarrant to move to a full time position in Infection Control with AHS.



Wanted: TARRANT Sentinels *Sentinel peer referral program*

We would like to expand our TARRANT network to improve surveillance throughout the province. Do you know of any clinics that would be interested in joining the Viral Watch program? We are always interested in increasing the number of active sentinels to replace those who are leaving or retiring. This year, we are particularly interested in increasing participation of clinics in Northern Alberta and in areas with a significant number of aboriginal patients.

Clinic: _____

Physician/ nurse practitioner: _____

Phone: _____ **E-mail address:** _____

Suggested by: _____

How is Your Swabbing Technique?

*Nasopharyngeal Swab Procedure (PHAC 2006)**

1. Use the swab supplied with the **viral transport media**.
2. Explain the procedure to the patient.
3. When you collect specimens, wear gloves and a mask. Change gloves and **wash your hands between each patient**.
4. If the patient has a lot of mucus in the nose, this can interfere with the collection of cells. Either ask the patient to use a tissue to gently clean out visible nasal mucus or clean the nostril yourself with a cotton swab.
5. Estimate the distance to the nasopharynx: Prior to insertion, measure the distance from the corner of the nose to the front of the ear and **insert the swab only half this length**.
6. Seat the patient comfortably. Tilt the patient's head back slightly to straighten the passage from the front of the nose to the nasopharynx to make insertion of the swab easier.
7. Insert the swab provided along the nasal septum (straight back), along the floor of the nose, until it reaches the posterior nares; gentle rotation of the swab may be helpful. (If resistance is encountered, try the other nostril; the patient may have a deviated septum.)
8. **Allow the swab to sit in place for 5–10 seconds.**
9. **Rotate the swab several times to dislodge the columnar epithelial cells.**
Note: Insertion of the swab usually induces a cough.
10. Withdraw the swab and place it in the collection tube, **refrigerate immediately**.
11. Remove gloves and wash hands.
12. Attach completed pink requisition and transport specimen to the laboratory.

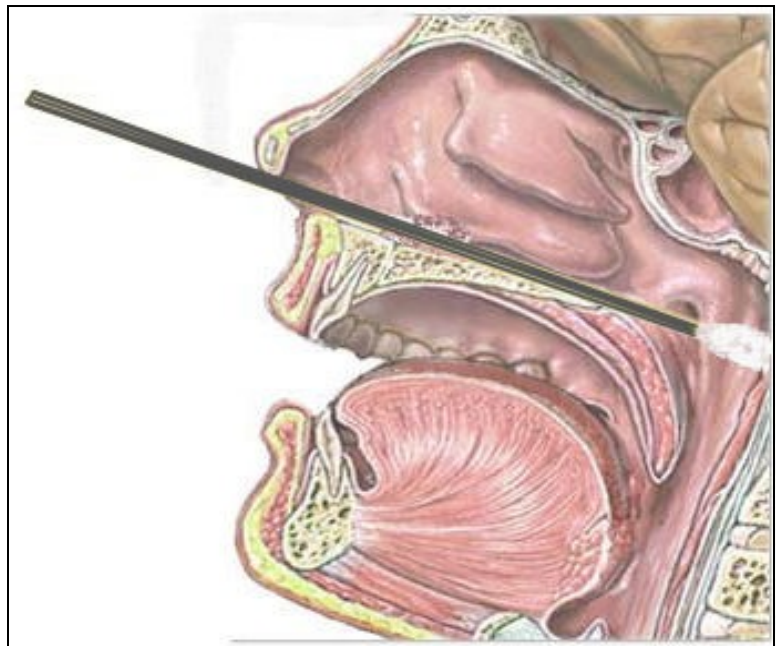


Image from: http://health.utah.gov/epi/fact_sheets/

* Public Health Agency of Canada website: 2006. Available at: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/pandemic/docs/plan/>

H1N1 Survey

We recently sent out a second round survey to hear about Alberta family physicians' thoughts and experiences during the H1N1 pandemic.

This is a follow-up to the survey we conducted early in the pandemic. We plan to compare the attitudes and experiences of Alberta family physicians during the first wave of the H1N1 pandemic to their experiences in the second wave. A second group of family physicians who did not participate in the first round were also asked to complete a survey.

If you received and returned one of our surveys, we appreciate your contributions!

Thank-you to those who have already filled it out. We hope that this second round of the survey will provide us with new, useful insights into how we can advocate for physicians as frontline healthcare workers in a pandemic situation. We will be using the data to write a report for Alberta Health, as well as combining this data with our first survey to write publications.



Tarrant On-line Reporting Option Coming Soon!

We are introducing a new online reporting method for TARRANT that will be both efficient and environmentally friendly. You will be able to access the new method of reporting through the TARRANT website (www.tarrantviralwatch.ca).

We hope to have this option available by the end of October, 2010. If you are interested please fax us the form below or e-mail us. (tarrant@ucalgary.ca) If you don't have Internet in your office, you can still complete and fax the paper forms.

Interested in On-line Reporting for Tarrant?

If you would like to switch over to our new online reporting system, please provide us with your email address and we will set you up with an account. Fill out the form below and either fax it back to us (403-270-4329) or e-mail us at tarrant@ucalgary.ca

Name:

Email Address:
