

Avian Flu
Christian Apollon
11/9/05

The Avian (bird) Infuenza (flu) is a serious virus that seeks to reek havoc on world livestock and even human life. This virus harbors in the intestines of birds and it is usually dormant and ineffective within the bird. As time has progressed there have been many things that have been culminating in this bird-born virus. Birds, wild and domestic alike, have been dying at an enormous rate because of it! +140 million birds have died because of it, or have been killed in order to contain the spread of the virus. It is highly contagious, but can only be transmitted to other livestock.

It can also be transmitted to humans via bird excretion. Although humans can only be affected in this manner, there is much discussion of the virus mutating to a human-to-human transmission. If this occurs, it is projected to kill off over 150 million people, which is about 2.5% of the world's population. This is very reminiscent of the Spanish flu in 1918. This virus has the potential to kill a large number of people in just a matter of a few months. The main thing at this point is making sure that there are enough antiviral drugs to treat and help prevent everyone from getting it and also to contain this virus from spreading elsewhere. So far, it has spread into Europe and throughout most of Asia. Out of the 1.3 billion people that live in China, 75% of the population lives on a farm. China is home to more than 13 billion chickens, more than 10 times its own population.

The World Health Organization has developed two antiviral drugs that will combat against this virus by interrupting the viruses ability to replicate within the body.

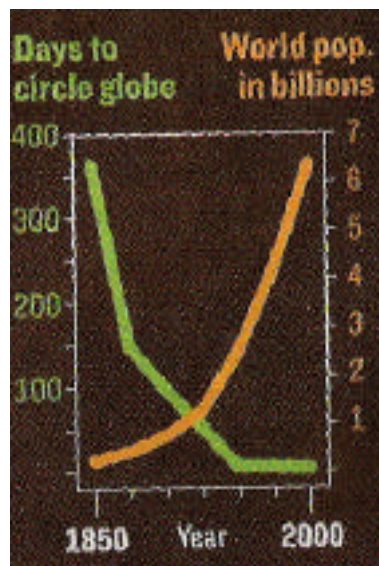
Tamiflu, which is a pill taken orally and Relenza which is an inhalant that has basically the same effect ast the Tamiflu. Tamiflu is regarded highly.

Advantages:

- Capability to reduce the severity
- Capability to reducethe length of the disease.

Disadvantages:

- Not a vaccine
- Early distribution of the drugs may cause build up of resistance of virus
- More stockpile



Sources:

- www.redorbit.com
- ww.cdc.gov
- www.who.int
- www.cbc.ca
- Newsweek Magazine