

To all physicians caring for
immunocompromised patients in
Switzerland

Geneva October 27th 2008

Concerns: Influenza treatment and prophylaxis in immunocompromised hosts

Dear colleagues

Last year we observed that approximately 18% of circulating strains in Switzerland were resistant to oseltamivir (Tamiflu^R) (data from the Influenza Center). Recent international Influenza surveillance leads us to expect that the large majority (probably >80%) of Influenza A (H1N1) virus circulating in the community this season will be resistant to oseltamivir. The relative importance of H1N1 and H3N2 isolates that will circulate this season remains speculative. However the increased resistance of H1N1 isolates implies that both prophylaxis and treatment strategies in immunocompromised hosts need to be revised.

For the moment there is no documented cross-resistance with zanamivir (Relenza^R) given by oral inhalation (for treatment: 2 doses of 5 mg are given twice per day for a total of 10 days; for prophylaxis: 2 doses of 5 mg are given once per day). Please refer to the Compendium for more detailed information and contraindications in unstable obstructive diseases.

Amantadine (Symmetrel^R) also remains active against H1N1, but is not expected to be active against recently circulating H3N2 (the majority of recent strains exhibit resistance).

We hope that this information will be useful and will help you to manage Influenza cases this season.

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