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## **Flu H2N2, mortality and vaccination**

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Cuando casi no se ha acabado el eco de la gripe A (H1N1), y de sus profecías apocalípticas no cumplidas, llega la amenaza de la gripe H2N2. Se publica un texto en la revista Nature en que se comenta la vuelta de la gripe asiática que asoló el mundo en los 50 y 60 del siglo XX. Y se recomienda directamente la vacunación. Sin embargo, los datos de muertos en dicho texto son una manipulación que lleva a crear miedo. En más de una década de gripe asiática (H2N2) hubo un millón y medio de muertos en el mundo, lo que significa que fue una gripe levísima.

Flu H2N2 is presented as a terrible epidemic in the XX century, with one and half million deads from 1957 to 1968. But this data only give an impression of severity as we can expect around five millions with a “normal” seasonal flu in this period of time.

- **Flu H2N2, mortality and vaccination.** Gervas J. March 2011.

## H2N2 flu mortality and vaccination

“From 1957 until 1968, an H2N2 strain caused between 1 million and 4 million deaths worldwide”. This sentence in the beginning of a paper in Nature is repeated below the picture that illustrated the Comment (1).

Such number of deaths are not unusual, but expected. Only in the US, being conservative, it has been estimated a total of 41,000 deaths per “usual” seasonal flu (2) That’s about 136 deaths per million in the US.

In the 1960' the world population was around three billions. Having equal seasonal flu mortality than in the US we can expect 400.000 deaths per year. That is, in twelve years (1957-1968) almost 5 millions. And, of course, more people die in the world than in the US for infectious diseases as flu. So mortality is not a good argument for promoting H2N2 vaccination.

Authors of this Comment (1) should declare their conflicts of interest because what we need are randomized clinical trials of the flu vaccines. The immunologic response is not a guarantee that the vaccine will reduce severe infections and mortality. Demonstration of that benefit requires large randomized controlled trials, which are lacking for both H1N1 and H2N2 vaccines as well as for seasonal flu vaccines (3).

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1. Nabel GJ et al. Nature. **471**, 158-159 (2011)
2. Dushoff J et al. Am J Epidemiol. **63**, 181-187 (2006)
3. Gérvas J et al. Future of flu vaccines: Please may we have an RCT now? BMJ 339:doi:10.1136/bmj.b4651 (2009)

Conflict of interest

No one relating this topic.