

Re: Swine Flu

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.bio.evolution/2009-05/msg00021.html>

- *From:* "Graham Jones" <x@xxx>
 - *Date:* Mon, 11 May 2009 01:50:47 -0400 (EDT)
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"Darwin123" <drosen0000@xxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message
[news:gu36ra\\$1at6\\$1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](news:gu36ra$1at6$1@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)

On Apr 30, 12:36=A0pm, j_thomas <julianthom...@xxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

Swine influenza (also swine flu) refers to influenza caused by any strain of the influenza virus endemic in pigs (swine). Strains endemic in swine are called swine influenza virus (SIV). Of the three genera of human flu, two are endemic also in swine: Influenzavirus A is common and Influenzavirus C is rare. Influenzavirus B has not been reported in swine. Within Influenzavirus A and Influenzavirus C, the strains endemic to swine and humans are largely distinct.

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<http://bioisolutions.blogspot.com/2009/04/swine-flu-animation.html>

May I point out that the 1918 strain evolved its virulence in the trenches of WWI. Since there is no trench warfare, currently, I seriously doubt it will evolve the same way in its current manifestation.

The 1918 swine flue epidemic became a killer, but that was caused by specific conditions that are not likely to be repeated. I think one always has to be careful with rapidly mutating species like the flue, but that moderate precautions are sufficient.

Without the trenches, the virus can't spread as rapidly. Without spreading rapidly, the virus has to stay alive longer in its host body. In order to stay alive longer in the host body, the virus has to keep its host alive longer. Thus, there is little danger of the epidemic becoming the scary killer it was in 1918.

You are apparently talking about Paul Ewald's theories. Unfortunately you have garbled them into gibberish. Here is a better summary.

"As the Amherst College biologist Paul Ewald argues in his brilliant 1994

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book, "Evolution of Infectious Diseases," under normal circumstances the mildest offspring of any flu family will always triumph, because people who are infected with the worst strains go home and go to bed, whereas people infected with the mild strains go to work, ride the bus, and go to the movies. You're much more likely, in other words, to catch a mild virus than a nasty virus because you're more likely to run into someone with a mild case of flu than with a nasty case of flu. In 1918, Ewald says, these rules got inverted by the war. The Spanish flu turned nasty in the late summer in France. A mild strain of flu spreading from soldier to soldier in the trenches stayed in the trenches because none of the soldiers got so sick that they had to leave their posts. A debilitating strain, though, resulted in a soldier's being shipped out in a crowded troop transport, then moved to an even more crowded hospital, where he had every opportunity to infect others. Wars and refugee camps and urban overcrowding give the worst flu strains a huge evolutionary advantage. If there were ever again a civil war in China, flu-watchers would be on full alert."

(This is from http://www.gladwell.com/1997/1997_09_29_a_flu.htm)

Trenches favoured the *mild* strain.

There are more people in refugee camps and suffering from urban overcrowding today than ever before. Plenty of wars too.

Graham