

International Conference on **Influenza**

August 24-26, 2015 London, UK

Integrated surveillance of acute respiratory infections in Cuba since 2009 influenza pandemic

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Background: The integration of communicable disease surveillance set up a work target to the control programs. However, in many occasions they constitute isolated efforts (of microbiology, epidemiology or clinical) that don't favor the processes of decision making neither the improvement of the strategies.

Objectives: To integrate the clinical-epidemiological-microbiological surveillance in the prevention and control of the Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI) and to disseminate the results at national and international level.

Results: The contribution of the Pedro Kourí Institute (IPK) to the integration of the ARI surveillance in Cuba since 2009 Influenza pandemic, as part of the ARI National Control Program (ARI-NCP), is presented. In the strategy of synthesis and analysis of the microbiology, epidemiology and clinical evidences to the country, ARI surveillance is included. The main exits of the surveillance reports are shown, which are systematically sent to the National Health System units. Data include the series of Medical Assistances (MA) and Severe Acute Respiratory Infections (SARI) hospitalizations by provinces and age groups, as well as the results of the virology studies. That surveillance of Influenza and other respiratory virus circulation has allowed the proposal to the ARI-NCP a change in administration date of influenza vaccine and to change it from north to south hemisphere composition since 2015-16 influenza season. The diffusion and dissemination of the surveillance reports at national and international levels is systematized in the weekly IPK Bulletin, the weekly PAHO/WHO bulletins, papers in national and international journals, PhD and Master thesis, and the presentation in international scientific events.

Conclusions: Since the 2009 influenza pandemic, the integrated surveillance of ARI, synthesized and analyzed from the IPK, has emitted useful information to the NCP and allowed the integration for the first time of Cuba to the international surveillance of Influenza. Periodic and up-to-date information for the handling of Ari and SARI cases has contributed to decision taking at all health care levels. Surveillances data are also offered for evaluation and operational researches, and the development of new national vaccines. The opportune reports allow implementing prevention and control actions to minimize the impact of these infections in the population's health.

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