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## **Human bird flu spreads to western Turkey**

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**9 January, 2006**

## **THE ARTICLE**

### **Human bird flu spreads to western Turkey**

The human form of bird flu is continuing its slow trek west with fresh outbreaks reported in the Turkish capital Ankara. A health ministry official has confirmed three more cases of infection, sparking fear and panic among Turkey's citizens. The news adds to the sense of crisis already gripping the country after the deaths of three children a few days ago. At least two of the deaths were attributed to the virulent H5N1 strain of the virus, which has taken over 70 lives in South East Asia since 2003. The two children had reportedly been playing with the carcass of an infected bird. Neighboring countries have reacted with speed and alarm. Iran has closed its borders with Turkey and Russia has advised its nationals against any unnecessary visits.

Health officials have urged people to not overly panic at the latest outbreak. The Turkish authorities are currently conducting a massive cull of poultry in the eastern province of Van, the suspected source of the latest outbreak. However, opposition parties have accused health ministers of reacting too slowly in trying to limit the spread of the virus to other parts of the country. The media has also had a field day in lambasting the government for its lack of preparedness. Newspaper editorials are questioning why Turkey does not have measures in place similar to those in Holland or Britain. There are fears that the virus may soon mutate into a disease that can pass among humans, which may trigger a global pandemic and potentially kill millions.

## **WARM-UPS**

**1. IT'S HERE:** Imagine avian bird flu has arrived in your country. How will it affect your life? What will you expect your government to do? Will you be glued to the TV? Walk around the class and talk to other students. Ask them for their latest information on news of the virus.

**2. PANDEMICS:** In pairs / groups, talk about the following pandemics that have affected or might affect the world. Which ones are you particularly worried about? Which ones have directly affected your life (or might do so)?

- Avian bird flu
- Terrorism
- Materialism
- Coca-colarization
- Drug abuse
- Bad social behavior
- AIDS
- Pollution

**3. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

*Bird flu / west / outbreaks / influenza / crises / viruses / infected birds / speed / alarm / panic / poultry / media / preparedness / mutations / global pandemics*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

**4. OPINIONS:** How far do you agree with the following opinions on avian bird flu?

- a. Governments will prevent it from becoming a threat.
- b. It will never find a way to pass from human to human.
- c. Governments should start stockpiling drugs that fight the virus.
- d. Countries need to listen to the WHO, who says millions of people could die.
- e. Many governments still blindly believe bird flu is an "Asian problem".
- f. Bird flu will be big and develop into a deadly pandemic.
- g. Hunters should start killing all wild birds now.
- h. Eating chicken is too risky.

**5. CHICKEN:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with chickens. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**6. QUICK DEBATE:** Students A think bird flu will become a global catastrophe and emergency measures should be taken now. Students B think scientists are scaremongering and the virus will cause few human deaths. Change partners often.

## BEFORE READING / LISTENING

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a. Human bird flu is heading west and may soon reach Turkey.               | T / F |
| b. Three Turkish children died from bird flu a few days ago.               | T / F |
| c. Over 700 lives have been taken in Asia by the deadly H5N1 strain.       | T / F |
| d. Iran and Russia have closed their borders with Turkey.                  | T / F |
| e. Turkish officials are slaughtering thousands of chickens.               | T / F |
| f. The opposition congratulated health officials on their speedy response. | T / F |
| g. Media people spent a day in a field in Turkey.                          | T / F |
| h. The virus has mutated into a form that can spread among humans.         | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| a. trek       | citizens      |
| b. sparking   | metamorphose  |
| c. virulent   | high old time |
| d. carcass    | precipitating |
| e. nationals  | remains       |
| f. cull       | spark         |
| g. field day  | journey       |
| h. lambasting | slaughter     |
| i. mutate     | fatal         |
| j. trigger    | denouncing    |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |                                     |                                  |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. continuing its slow trek         | H5N1 strain of the virus         |
| b. sparking                         | global pandemic                  |
| c. attributed to the virulent       | not overly panic                 |
| d. the carcass                      | fear and panic                   |
| e. Russia has advised its nationals | of poultry                       |
| f. officials have urged people to   | similar to those in Holland      |
| g. a massive cull                   | against any unnecessary visits   |
| h. The media has also had a field   | west                             |
| i. measures in place                | day in lambasting the government |
| j. ...which may trigger a           | of an infected bird              |

## **WHILE READING / LISTENING**

**WRONG WORD:** Delete the five incorrect or least likely words from the ten in bold in each paragraph. In pairs / groups, agree on replacement words.

### **Human bird flu spreads to western Turkey**

The human form of bird flu is continuing its slow **trek** west with fresh outbreaks reported in the Turkish capital Ankara. A health ministry official has **confirmed** three more cases of infection, **sparkling** fear and panic among Turkey's citizens. The news **subtracts** to the sense of crisis already **gripping** the country after the deaths of three children a few days ago. At least two of the deaths were attributed to the **virulent** H5N1 strain of the virus, which has **taken** over 70 lives in South East Asia since 2003. The two children had reportedly been playing with the **caucus** of an infected bird. Neighboring countries have **reacted** with speed and alarm. Iran has closed its borders with Turkey and Russia has advised its **nationalities** against any unnecessary visits.

Health officials have **purged** people to not **overly** panic at the latest outbreak. The Turkish authorities are currently conducting a massive **cull** of poultry in the eastern province of Van, the suspected **sauce** of the latest outbreak. However, opposition parties have accused health ministers of reacting too slowly in trying to **limit** the spread of the virus to other parts of the country. The media has also had a field **week** in lambasting the government for its lack of **preparedness**. Newspaper editorials are questioning why Turkey does not have measures in **tapes** similar to those in Holland or Britain. There are fears that the virus may soon **mutate** into a disease that can pass among humans, which may **gun** a global pandemic and potentially kill millions.

## **LISTENING**

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### **Human bird flu spreads to western Turkey**

The human form of bird flu is continuing its slow \_\_\_\_\_ west with fresh outbreaks reported in the Turkish capital Ankara. A health ministry official has \_\_\_\_\_ three more cases of infection, \_\_\_\_\_ fear and panic among Turkey's citizens. The news adds to the sense of crisis already \_\_\_\_\_ the country after the deaths of three children a few days ago. At least two of the deaths were attributed to the \_\_\_\_\_ H5N1 strain of the virus, which has taken over 70 lives in South East Asia since 2003. The two children had reportedly been playing with the \_\_\_\_\_ of an infected bird. Neighboring countries have reacted with speed and alarm. Iran has closed its borders with Turkey and Russia has advised its \_\_\_\_\_ against any unnecessary visits.

Health officials have urged people to not \_\_\_\_\_ panic at the latest outbreak. The Turkish authorities are currently conducting a massive \_\_\_\_\_ of poultry in the eastern province of Van, the suspected source of the latest outbreak. However, opposition parties have accused health ministers of \_\_\_\_\_ too slowly in trying to limit the spread of the virus to other parts of the country. The media has also had a field day in \_\_\_\_\_ the government for its lack of \_\_\_\_\_. Newspaper editorials are questioning why Turkey does not have measures in place similar to those in Holland or Britain. There are fears that the virus may soon \_\_\_\_\_ into a disease that can pass among humans, which may trigger a global pandemic and \_\_\_\_\_ kill millions.

## **AFTER READING / LISTENING**

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words '**fear**' and '**panic**'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. WRONG WORD:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. STUDENT "BIRD FLU" SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about bird flu and global pandemics.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

**6. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- |            |            |
|------------|------------|
| • slow     | • overly   |
| • cases    | • cull     |
| • gripping | • limit    |
| • virulent | • field    |
| • carcass  | • measures |
| • alarm    | • trigger  |

## **DISCUSSION**

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What were your initial thoughts on this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. Are you concerned about avian bird flu?
- d. Do you think the world is treating the threat seriously enough?
- e. What is your government doing to protect your country?
- f. What would you do if a human-to-human strain found its way into your country?
- g. What do you think is an effective way to fight the virus?
- h. The WHO has said the virus has the potential to kill millions. Have you seen, heard or read about this big news elsewhere?
- i. Do you think this could be a case of scientists scaremongering?
- j. Do you think more money will be made available to find a cure for bird flu if it reaches Western Europe or North America?

### STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. Should governments kill all wild birds to wipe out bird flu?
- d. What would happen to the world if millions started dying in Europe and North America?
- e. Do you think it's only time before a devastating pandemic hits the world?
- f. What do you think of the WHO's claim that millions could die?
- g. Do you think governments are coordinated in fighting bird flu?
- h. Will you now think twice about eating chicken?
- i. Do you think you'll become suspicious of flocks of birds?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

**AFTER DISCUSSION:** Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?



## **SPEAKING**

**ROLE PLAY:** This role play is to discuss whether or not more international action should be taken immediately to halt the spread of avian bird flu. Team up with classmates who have been assigned the same role as you. Develop your roles and discuss ideas and “strategies” before the role play begins.

Introduce yourself to the other role players.

### **Role A – Head of WHO**

You are convinced avian bird flu poses the greatest threat to mankind for centuries. You are amazed so few countries seem concerned. You have data that suggest the virus is very close to mutating and spreading to and among humans. Worldwide action must be taken now.

THINK OF ACTIONS THAT MUST BE TAKEN TO FIGHT BIRD FLU.

### **Role B – Chicken farmer**

Your livelihood is at risk from bird flu. You understand the danger but do not want to kill any of your chickens until people start dying. You don't think more humans will die. You think the WHO is over-reacting. You believe keeping chickens indoors will prevent the spread of the virus.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY BIRD FLU WILL NOT BE A PROBLEM.

### **Role C – Citizen**

You are alarmed that your government is not acting to protect your country from bird flu. You know over 70 people have died in Asia from the virus. You think it's only a matter of time before the virus mutates and spreads to humans. You believe international governments will be caught off-guard.

THINK OF MEASURES YOUR GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE TAKING.

### **Role D – Government official**

Naturally, you know about bird flu. You have all of the scientific reports available. You are 100% sure the virus will not affect humans. It did so in Asia because people lived so close to poultry. You are shocked at the WHO's irresponsibility in scaring people. You have enough vaccine.

THINK OF MORE REASONS WHY BIRD FLU IS NOT A BIG RISK.

Change roles and repeat the role play. Comment in groups about the differences between the two role plays.

In pairs / groups, discuss whether you really believe in what you said while you were in your roles.

## **HOMEWORK**

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find more information on avian bird flu and the H5N1 virus. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

**3. LETTER:** Write a letter to your government. Express your concerns over the threat of a potentially lethal, global bird flu pandemic. Tell the government what it should be doing right now. Read your letters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

**4. CHICKEN:** You are a chicken. You have heard the stories about bird flu. You're not sure which worries you more – bird flu or being slaughtered by your farmer. Write your diary / journal entry for a day in your life and your thoughts on the virus reaching your farm. Read your entries to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all have similar concerns?

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F      b. T      c. F      d. F      e. T      f. F      g. F      h. F

### SYNONYM MATCH:

- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| a. trek       | journey       |
| b. sparking   | precipitating |
| c. virulent   | fatal         |
| d. carcass    | remains       |
| e. nationals  | citizens      |
| f. cull       | slaughter     |
| g. field day  | high old time |
| h. lambasting | denouncing    |
| i. mutate     | metamorphose  |
| j. trigger    | spark         |

### PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                     |                                  |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. continuing its slow trek         | west                             |
| b. sparking                         | fear and panic                   |
| c. attributed to the virulent       | H5N1 strain of the virus         |
| d. the carcass                      | of an infected bird              |
| e. Russia has advised its nationals | against any unnecessary visits   |
| f. officials have urged people to   | not overly panic                 |
| g. a massive cull                   | of poultry                       |
| h. The media has also had a field   | day in lambasting the government |
| i. measures in place                | similar to those in Holland      |
| j. ...which may trigger a           | global pandemic                  |

### WRONG WORD:

#### Human bird flu spreads to western Turkey

The human form of bird flu is continuing its slow trek west with fresh outbreaks reported in the Turkish capital Ankara. A health ministry official has confirmed three more cases of infection, **sparking** fear and panic among Turkey's citizens. The news **adds** to the sense of crisis already **gripping** the country after the deaths of three children a few days ago. At least two of the deaths were attributed to the virulent H5N1 strain of the virus, which has taken over 70 lives in South East Asia since 2003. The two children had reportedly been playing with the **carcass** of an infected bird. Neighboring countries have reacted with speed and alarm. Iran has closed its borders with Turkey and Russia has advised its **nationals** against any unnecessary visits.

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