

# China reports 79 deaths from H7N9 bird flu in January

China reported 79 fatalities from H7N9 avian flu in January, health authorities said Wednesday.

Since the beginning of the year, 16 provincial regions have reported human H7N9 avian flu cases, with 192 cases in January, according to the National Health and Family Planning Commission.

From Feb. 6 to 12, 69 such cases were reported across the country, including eight fatalities.

In China, most cases were around the Yangtze River Delta and Pearl River Delta areas, said Shu Yuelong, director of the Chinese National Influenza Center.

Contact with infected poultry and exposure to live poultry markets pose risks of infection, Shu said, adding that evidence rules out sustained human-to-human transmission of avian flu.

Health authorities are implementing a raft of measures to address the situation, including improving surveillance and risk assessment, more training for medical staff, and allocating medical resources more effectively.