

# Predicting the impact

*‘Although the next influenza pandemic in the UK may cause considerable illness and death, great uncertainty is associated with any estimate of the pandemic’s potential impact.’* UK Pandemic Influenza contingency Plan 2005



# Expected scale and severity

	<b>Expected deaths</b>	<b>Expected hospitalisations</b>
<b>Global</b>	2-50 million	6.4-28.1 million
<b>High-income countries</b>	280,000 - 650,000	1.5-5.2 million
<b>UK</b>	<b>Minimum of 50,000</b>	<b>Minimum of 80,000</b>



# Pandemic flu effect on the UK

- Impossible to predict when it will begin
- Difficult to predict impact with any accuracy
- Estimates of scale of illness, death rates and those most likely to have severe illness are uncertain
- Will also depend on the availability and effectiveness of antiviral drugs and vaccines



# Impact on health services

- Likely to place great pressure on health and social services
  - Increased numbers of patients requiring treatment
  - Depletion of the workforce due to illness and other disruption



# Impact on business

- 25% of the UK workforce will take 5-8 working days off over a three-month period
- Estimates suggest that during the peak absenteeism will double in the private sector and increase by two-thirds in the public sector



# Impact on schools and services

- Likely to spread rapidly in schools and other closed communities
- Impact on all services including police, fire, the military, fuel supply, food production, distribution and transport, prisons, education and business



# Pandemic waves (1)

Past experience teaches us that following the emergence of a new pandemic virus:

- more than one wave of influenza is likely
- the gaps between the waves may be weeks or months
- a subsequent wave could be worse than the first



## Pandemic waves (2)

- The **1918/19** A/H1N1 pandemic occurred in three distinct waves: early spring 1918, autumn 1918 and winter 1919
- The second wave was the largest and had the highest case fatality





## Pandemic waves (3)

- In **1957/58** the second wave was very small in comparison to the first
- In contrast, the **1968/69 A/H3N2** pandemic, the second wave in 1969/70 was more severe than the epidemic wave in the winter of 1968/69



# Seasonal and pandemic influenza: Weekly GP consultations for influenza-like illness

RCGP Index for Influenza & Influenza-like Illness, 1966 and 2003  
(Year marked at start of season i.e. Week 40 (October))

