

THE SCOTSMAN

Thu 5 Jan 2006

## Turkey confirms first human bird flu death

A 14-YEAR-OLD Turkish boy has become the first person from outside south-east Asia and China to die of the deadly H5N1 form of bird flu, doctors said last night.

As Turkish officials confirmed yesterday that two people had been diagnosed with bird flu - the dead boy and his sister, who is seriously ill - the UK government said it would be monitoring closely the situation.

Recep Akdag, the Turkish health minister, said the two cases had occurred in the east of the country, and if the boy's death is officially confirmed as a result of the H5N1 strain, it would mark a dramatic shift westwards for the disease.

Doctors had originally said the boy, Mehmet Ali Kocigit, died of pneumonia on Sunday in Van hospital in eastern Turkey. But last night, Huseyin Avni Sahin, the head doctor at Van hospital, told a news conference: "He died of the H5N1 strain of bird flu."

Mehmet was among four siblings admitted to hospital last week. The children helped to raise poultry on a small farm in the town of Dogubeyazit, and were in close contact with sick birds. The boy's sister, Fatma, is seriously ill with bird flu, while a third sibling is also suspected of having the disease.

Guenael Rodier, special adviser on communicable diseases at the World Health Organisation's European office, said: "We are pretty confident that unfortunately it is a human case of H5N1."

The H5N1 strain has killed more than 70 people in east Asia since 2003 and forced the slaughter of millions of birds.

Turkey, which lies on the path of migratory birds that are believed to spread the virus, has suffered two outbreaks of the disease among poultry in the past three months.

A spokesman for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs said it would be monitoring the news from Turkey.

### Web links

- [Dept of Health - pandemic flu](http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/EmergencyPlanning/PandemicFlu/fs/en)  
<http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/EmergencyPlanning/PandemicFlu/fs/en>
- [WHO - Bird Flu fact sheet](http://www.who.int/csr/don/2004_01_15/en/)  
[http://www.who.int/csr/don/2004\\_01\\_15/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/don/2004_01_15/en/)

### Related topic

- [Bird flu](http://news.scotsman.com/topics.cfm?tid=161)  
<http://news.scotsman.com/topics.cfm?tid=161>



perfect partners

> The new chat up line:

> Do you sign in here often

DATING.scotsman.com

**This article:** <http://news.scotsman.com/topics.cfm?tid=161&id=18112006>

**Last updated:** 05-Jan-06 10:59 GMT

---

**Ads by Google**

**[Health Management Account](#)**

Activa: a new way to get more out of the money you spend on health  
[www.activa.co.nz](http://www.activa.co.nz)

**[Unexplained Symptoms?](#)**

Why guess? Our business is that of telling you what's really going on.  
[www.Diagnose-Me.com](http://www.Diagnose-Me.com)

**[Healthcare Links](#)**

Links and resources for those seeking online information.  
[www.medmark.org](http://www.medmark.org)

---