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Swine flu epidemic in a school: Tip of the iceberg pattern

Swine flu is an important emerging infectious disease that is being seen around the world.¹ The pandemic outbreak is observed at present (August 5, 2009). The author hereby discusses personal experience on the situation of a swine flu epidemic in a school. The first index case of this school was detected at a primary health care center. On further history tracking, another case, the second index case, could be derived. The second case is the sister of the first case who lived in the same home and studied in the same school as the first index case. After the detection of the two index cases, a school survey was performed and there were 69 cases with the history of flu-like symptoms. However, these cases had a history of no complete diagnosis and could be classified as suspicious cases only. The questions are not only "why are there many abandoned and possible underdiagnosed cases?" but also "how can we believe the

official report on the accumulated number of infected cases?". The "tip of the iceberg pattern can be expected".² Assuming that all questionable 69 cases had an underdiagnosis of swine flu, the ratio of the tip to the whole iceberg, that is, overt to occult cases is equal to 2:69 or 1:34.5.

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