

Original Article

## Seroprevalance of Influenza A in swine population of Rangamati and Khagrachhari districts

Md. Karim Uddin<sup>1, #</sup>, Md. Shamim Ahasan<sup>1</sup>, Mohammad Rafiqul Islam<sup>2</sup>, M. M. Mafizul Islam<sup>3</sup> and Md. Fazlul Hoque<sup>1</sup>

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### AFFILIATIONS

<sup>1</sup>Department of Medicine, Surgery and Obstetrics, Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University (HSTU), Dinajpur, Bangladesh.

<sup>2</sup>Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC), Farmgate, Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh.

<sup>3</sup>Department of Microbiology, Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University, Dinajpur, Bangladesh.

### CORRESPONDENCE:

# Md. Karim Uddin,  
Department of Medicine, Surgery and Obstetrics, Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University (HSTU), Dinajpur, Bangladesh.  
E-mail: [karim.vetmed@gmail.com](mailto:karim.vetmed@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This study is conducted to assess the seroprevalence and associated risk factors (e.g., age, sex, bio-security practices and management system) of Influenza A virus in swine population of Rangamati and Khagrachhari Districts

**Materials and methods:** Prevalence study Influenza A in swine population was conducted over a period of six months Rangamati and Khagrachhari Districts between July to December 2013. 180 blood samples were collected from pigs, and the samples were tested for the detection of Influenza antibody using Indirect ELISA method.

**Results:** Total numbers of samples were 180 and numbers of positive cases were 22. Then the overall seroprevalence between the aforesaid districts was found to be 12.22%. Results of the investigation revealed that the seroprevalence of influenza A was 15% in Rangamati district, 10% in Khagrachhari district. The highest seroprevalence was found in Rangamati district (15%) and the lowest seroprevalence was (10%) found in Khagrachhari district. On the basis of sex, seroprevalence rate of influenza A was found 14.29% in male pigs and 9.76% in female pigs.

**Conclusion:** The study confirms that influenza virus is circulating in the pig populations of hill tracts area of Bangladesh. Our study had a number of limitations. Veterinarians, researchers and health officials will get new information from this research which will be helpful for developing prevention strategy for combating against this disease.

### KEYWORDS

Influenza A; Seroprevalence; Swine; Pigs

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## INTRODUCTION

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Influenza A virus is a single-stranded negative-sense RNA virus with 7 to 8 segmented genome encoded with eleven distinctive viral proteins ([Lamb, 2001](#); [Olsen et al., 2006](#)). The replication of influenza virus of avian and human origin in swine has led to the coming out of novel reassortant viruses by changing its nature antigenically ([Ito et al., 1998](#)). For viral replication transmission is the first step in the host. For successful transmission of virus, a contact between virus source and susceptible host is required ([Thomas and Weber, 2001](#)).

Swine tracheal epithelial cells contain both  $\alpha$ -2,3 and  $\alpha$ -2,6 sialic acids receptors, ([Nelli et al., 2010](#); [Trebbien et al., 2011](#)). Consequently, swines are susceptible host to influenza viruses of avian, swine, and human type and act as vectors of various influenza viruses for genetic reassortment, resulting in evolving of new influenza virus sub-types ([Imai and Kawaoka, 2012](#)) and thus, swine has been called as mixing vessel where reassortant influenza virus can take place. The recent emergence of a pandemic influenza A virus of human type bearing genome thought to be of swine origin frazzled again the concern in the swine influenza epidemiology ([Smith et al., 2009](#)) and they possibly an intermediary host for the adjustment of avian type viruses to mammals and a mixing vessel for the evolving of reassortment viruses ([Van Reeth et al., 2012](#)). On pig farms swine influenza is very common, similar to that observed in humans, but affects the animals all year round, whatever the season.

As in humans, the intensity of clinical signs in pigs is inconsistent and can be influenced by many factors such as type of virus, the age and protected level of the infected pig, weather, the type of housing, and also co-infections ([Khatri et al., 2010](#); [Deblanc et al., 2013](#); [Fablet et al., 2013](#)). The lungs are found to be the predilection site of flu virus in pigs is confined to the air way. This respiratory virus replicates in epithelial cells of the respiratory system ([Brown, 2000](#)); thus nasal secretions are the prime source of excretion of influenza virus. Characteristic clinical signs of the acute infection are pyrexia, anorexia, inactivity and reluctance to rise after 1 to 3 days of an incubation period ([Olsen et al., 2006](#)).

To preserved viral epitopes of virus, and protecting partially with an genetically distinct viral strains can arise even though both strains may exhibit low cross-reactive antibodies this virus stimulates mucosal and systemic cellular immune responses when natural infection occurs ([De Vleeschauwer et al., 2011](#)). [Kyriakis et al. \(2010\)](#)

recommended that preceding protection to the recognized strains of virus due to infection, partly immunized pigs in European countries against pandemic influenza virus.

Many years ago, diagnosis of influenza was basically done by clinical signs, because, to detect the infection in live pigs there was no other methodology. Although, the diagnosis by sign and symptoms only not easy in the last decennary while a part of the individuals has been infected with the influenza and infections have been recognized sub clinically due to indistinct immunological protection ([Böttcher et al. 2006](#)). Currently to detect influenza infections rapid diagnostic tests are available. Information on the seroprevalence and distribution of swine influenza viruses remains limited in different countries globally including Bangladesh. Understanding the swine influenza epidemiology is required for the improvement of gainful influenza surveillance and control plan to limit the spread of these viruses in swine. Epidemiology of Swine influenza varies throughout the countries due to several factors such as season, swine population, farming and management practices.

There are no available data of seroprevalence of influenza A in swine population of Hill tracts area of Bangladesh. To generate a new idea this research was undertaken to explore the seroprevalence status of influenza a in swine population of Rangamati and Khagrachhari districts of Bangladesh by using indirect ELISA and Identification of associated risk factors of Influenza A virus Epidemiology.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

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**Study design:** We conducted this cross sectional study from May to November of 2013. Backyard pigs of the pig-rearing village of Rangamati and Khagrachhari districts of Bangladesh are our target population. We chosen the earliest house at random and a house that was placed 2–3 house far from the first house in the same route was chosen for sampling, and this procedure was continued for next house selection.

**Study area:**The study was conducted in pig-raising villages of Rangamati and Khagrachhari districts of Bangladesh.

**Questionnaire:** Data collection was performed by using a pretested questionnaire through in person interview. First author carried out the interviews of pig owner in study area. In general, the information covered in the questionnaire were demographic characteristics, age group

p, contact with other species, housing system of pig, flulike sign, pigs were sick compared to the total in last month, ili symptoms, coughing, nasal discharge, lethargy, increased temperature and biosecurity practices. A total of 180 farmers have given consent to be interviewed across 2 districts. Information gathered in the questionnaire was entered in the Microsoft Excel worksheet, 2007 and then exported to STATA 13 for statistical analysis.



**Figure:** Study area for Influenza A in Bangladesh.

**Sample collection and testing:** In every selected household, we perform blood sampling in single pig. Samples of 3-5 mL of blood were collected from cranial vena cava/external jugular vein of individual pigs. Sample containing syringes are positioned at on a 45 degree slant direction for two hours at ambient room temperature for serum separation. All the collected serum samples in cryotube and shifted to the Veterinary Medicine Laboratory, HSTU maintaining cool chain at 4°C and then store at -20°C until testing. IDEXX Influenza A Ab test kit (IDEXX Laboratories, Westbrook, ME, USA), is used to test the samples for the presence of antibodies to Influenza A virus. This test is a blocking ELISA (IDEXX, 2013), 95.4% sensitivity and 99.7% Specificity with results being expressed as sample to negative control (S/N) ratios.

**Approval:** Approval was taken from ethical committee of Faculty of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, HSTU for using animals by describing the protocols. After

explaining the objectives of this study, consent was taken from all participating backyard pig raisers. Collection of blood samples was done by following standard operating procedure and questionnaire responses were given on a voluntary basis.

**Statistical analysis:** Individual household questionnaire data were entered into Microsoft Excel file. This was then exported to STATA 13.0 (Stata Corporation., College Station, TX, USA) for data cleaning and data management. Stata were used for descriptive and statistical analyses. In addition, to assess risk factors associated with Influenza A in backyard pigs, we estimated odds ratios and confidence interval performing Chi square test and bivariate logistic regression using Stata software.

## RESULTS

The cases of seropositive animals for Influenza A from each district are given in **Table 1**. Total number of samples were 180 and number of positive cases were 22. Then the overall seroprevalence between the aforesaid districts was found to be 12.22% (**Table 1**). Results of the investigation revealed that the seroprevalence of influenza A was 15% in Rangamati district, 10% in Khagrachhari district (**Table 1**).

**Table 1.** Prevalence of Influenza A in Rangamati and Khagrachhari districts.

Samples	Sample (N)	Positive cases (n)	Negative cases (n)	Prevalence (%)
Total Sample	180	22	158	12.22
Rangamati district	80	12	68	15
Khagrachhari district	100	10	90	10
Male	98	14	84	14.28
Female	82	8	74	9.76
Grower	52	6	46	11.54
Fattening	64	8	56	12.5
Adult	64	8	56	12.5

The highest seroprevalence was found in Rangamati district (15%) and the lowest seroprevalence was (10%) found in Khagrachhari district. On the basis of sex, seroprevalence rate of influenza A was found 14.29% in male pigs and 9.76% in female pigs (**Table 1**). The seroprevalence of influenza A was studied based on age group and presented on **Table 1**. It was observed that 11.5% seroprevalence found in grower pigs, 12.5% in fattening pigs and 12.5% in adult pigs. The highest (12.5%) prevalence was found in fattening and adult pigs in comparison to grower pigs.

**Table 2** show factors that were significantly associated with Influenza A in pig , using chi-squared test. The significance level was considered at 5 % ( $P<0.05$ ). The result of the analysis revealed that Contact with other Species, Pigs were sick compared to the total in last month, Sneezing, Coughing, Nasal Discharge, Increased temperature were significantly associated with the likelihood for Influenza A in pigs. Pig reared in confined outdoor housing system showed to have a significantly greater risk for Influenza A infection compared to pigs reared under confined-indoor, tethered-outdoor and scavenging system. The odds of Influenza A of pigs reared in these housing systems were around four times higher than scavenging system. If the sick Pigs compared to the total in last month is less than 10 % were fifteen times less likely (OR=0.56) seropositive to Influenza A

compared to number of sick Pigs compared to the total in last month is 10-50 %.

The presence of sneezing significantly increased the probability of infection. Pigs with sneezing were about 6 times more likely (OR=5.88) to be seropositive for Influenza A, compared to pigs without sneezing. Coughing in pigs significantly increased the probability of infection. Pigs with coughing were 10 times more likely (OR=10.13) to be seropositive for Influenza A, compared to pigs without coughing. The disease odds increased by five times when body temperature of pig increased compared to Normal body temperature of pig. Nasal discharge in Pigs make 5.75 times more likely (OR=5.75) to test seropositive for Influenza A as compared to pigs without nasal discharge.

**Table1.** Prevalance and associated risk factors of influenza A in swine population of Rangamati and Khagrachhari Districts

Characteristics	N=180(%)	OR(95% CI)	P-value
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	98(54.4)	1.54(0.61- 3.88)	0.358
Female	82(45.6)	1	
<b>Age group</b>			
Fattening	64(35.6)	1.10(0.35-3.38)	0.87
Adult	64(35.6)	1.10(0.35-3.38)	0.87
Grower	52(28.9)	1	
<b>Contact with other Species</b>			
Chicken	78(49.3)	6.90(.82- 58.21)	0.076
Neighboring pig		1	
<b>Housing system of pig</b>			
Confined-indoor	12(6.7)	4.8(.60-38.22)	0.138
Confined-outdoor	78(40)	4.8(1.02- 22.49)	0.047
Tethered-outdoor	46(25.6)	3.6(0.69-18.83)	0.129
Scavenging	50(27.8)	1	
<b>Flulike sign</b>			
Yes	128(71.1)	4.63(1.04-20.58)	0.044
No		1	
<b>Pigs were sick compared to the total in last 6 months</b>			
10%	142(78.9)	.56(.133- 2.33)	0.424
50%	34(18.9)	8.4(2.46- 28.66)	0.001
>50%	4(2.2)	1	
<b>Ili symptoms</b>			
Sneezing			
Yes	22(12.2)	5.88(2.10- 16.42)	0.001
No		1	
Reduced feed intake	24(13.3)	NA	
Coughing			
Yes	22(12.2)	10.13(3.64-28.26)	0.000
No		1	
<b>Nasal discharge</b>			
Yes	30(16.7)	5.75(2.19-15.04)	0.000
No		1	
<b>Lethargy</b>			
Yes	64(35.6)	2.45(1.00-6.03)	0.052
No		1	
Poor growth	94(52.2)		
<b>Increased temperature</b>			
Yes	54(30)	5.16(2.02-13.21)	0.015
No		1	
<b>Biosecurity</b>			
Wild birds visible on property	130(72.2)	1.21(0.25- 5.84)	0.806
Water pond on farm or nearby	36(20)	1.8(0.73-4.44)	0.202
Farm located within 500 meters of main road	32(17.8)	1.91(0.71-5.15)	0.199

## DISCUSSION

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This is the initial seroprevalence study of influenza A in the pig population ever conducted in Rangamati and Khagrachhari districts of Bangladesh. The study demonstrated the presence of antibodies to influenza A with a high degree of certainty. Transmission of the influenza virus in local pigs in Rangamati and Khagrachhari districts brought about occurrences of respiratory disease with high morbidity except low mortality. Although, it is unsure whether or not the dissemination of this agent assisted to the expression of signs and symptoms of other respiratory illnesses and appeared to increase severity during this same time period. In most countries influenza A infections of backyard pigs discovered in rigorously rearing pigs however there are few documents revealed, regarding the circulation of illnesses in pigs (Olsen et al., 2000). By ELISA, approximately 12.22 % of pigs serum tested in this study were positive serologically for Influenza A. In Belgium and France serologic study conducted by (Van Reeth et al., 2004) of swine of finishing stage revealed that prevalences of influenza A are upper (55.4% and 28.9%) compared to this study findings. (Jung et al., 2007) found elevated seropositive cases within pigs for pandemic influenza (51.2%) and (Liu et al., 2011) found 31.1% seropositivity of influenza A in the pig population in China. Results of the investigation revealed that the seroprevalence of influenza A was 15% in Rangamati district, 10% in Khagrachhari district.

The highest seroprevalence was found in Rangamati district (15%) in contrast to Khagrachhari district (10%). Highest seroprevalence in Rangamati is due to presence of kaptai lake where different water lives in all seasons and foreigner waterfowls accumulated during winter season. Since, pig acts as mixing vessels for reassortment of influenza A virus so seroprevalence of influenza A in rangamati districts higher than that of khagrachhari due to presence of lake where waterfowls live their lives. The finding of the study is similar to the (Webster et al., 1978; Hinshaw et al., 1980; Serratos et al., 2007).

In the study areas, native pigs were reared under confined-outdoor, tethering system and also allowed to scavenge with backyard chickens and ducks in the yard, in the crop field near to water sources where domestic ducks, wild ducks and migratory ducks used to scavenge. These factors may contribute in natural infection to the native pigs (van der Vries et al., 2013). On the basis of sex, seroprevalence rate of influenza A was found 14.29% in male pigs and 9.76% in female pigs. This might be due to difference of immune status at various sex of pigs. It

was observed that 11.5% seroprevalence was found in grower pigs, 12.5% in fattening pigs and 12.5% in adult pigs.

The highest (12.5%) prevalence was found in fattening and adult pigs and the lowest prevalence was found in grower pigs. The result showed similarity with the study conducted by (Loeffen et al., 2003; Jeong et al., 2004). The nearly all commonly Influenza infection occurs at about 10 weeks of age. Colostrum antibodies in pigs against influenza virus endure for two to four months, relying on the primary level (Candotti et al., 2003). Weaning pigs may be safe from serious disease with elevated amount of MDA but cannot give protection against diseases and multiplication of the viral agent (Loeffen et al., 2003). This study found that Pigs moves in a farms where ducks and chickens were reared in close distance, they appear to be more likely to be seropositive for influenza A. which has similarity with the findings of (Ayora-Talavera, Cadavieco-Burgos et al. 2005). As result of reduced MDA swine could get infection, release viral particles, show characteristics signs, and hold innate immune reaction (Easterday and Van Reeth, 1999). The sampled pigs of this study previously not vaccinated against Influenza A virus. The animals seropositive to influenza may have been exposed to the virus from other infected pigs at any point of their lifetime. This study clearly demonstrated that influenza viruses were able to spread throughout the hill tract pig population.

## LIMITATIONS

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Our study had a number of limitations. First, it is possible that results may be confounded by serologic cross-reactivity between different viral subtypes. In our study, the possibility of cross-reaction between subtypes was not determined. Second, pigs from slaughterhouses or commercial farms are not included in these districts.

## CONCLUSION

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The study findings reveals that influenza A virus is circulating in the pig populations of Rangamati and Khagrachhari districts which is interesting. To know the type and clade of the virus further epidemiological investigations should be carried out throughout the country with molecular characterization.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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There is no conflict of interest to declare.

## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

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MKU and MFH designed the study. MFH supervised and MSA co-supervise the overall research work and provided valuable suggestions throughout the experiment. MMI assist MKU in the collection of samples from pigs and conducted laboratory test of serum. MKU performs statistical analysis. In writing and reviewing the manuscript and approved the final manuscript all the authors contributed.

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