



**For Immediate Release**

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**Face Protection Effective in Preventing the Spread of Influenza**

*Surgical Mask and Respirator Use Should Be Encouraged During Current Swine Flu Outbreak*

**Stanford, CA—May XX, 2009**—A new article in the journal *Risk Analysis* assessed various ways in which aerosol transmission of the flu, a central mode of diffusion which involves breathing droplets in the air, can be reduced. Results show that face protection is a key infection control measure for influenza and can thus affect how people should try to protect themselves from the swine flu.

Lawrence M. Wein, Ph.D., and Michael P. Atkinson of Stanford University constructed a mathematical model of aerosol transmission of the flu to explore infection control measures in the home.

Their model predicted that the use of face protection including N95 respirators (these fit tight around the face and are often worn by construction workers) and surgical masks (these fit looser around the face and are often worn by dental hygienists) are effective in preventing the flu. The filters in surgical masks keep out 98 percent of the virus. Also, only 30 percent of the benefits of the respirators and masks are achieved if they are used only after an infected person develops symptoms.

“Our research aids in the understanding of the efficacy of infection control measures for influenza, and provides a framework about the routes of transmission,” the authors conclude.

This timely article has the potential to impact current efforts and recommendations to control the so-called swine flu by international, national and local governments in perspective.

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**This study is published in the journal *Risk Analysis*. Media wishing to receive a PDF of this article may contact [journalnews@bos.blackwellpublishing.net](mailto:journalnews@bos.blackwellpublishing.net).**

To view the abstract for this article, please [click here](#).

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Published on behalf of the Society for Risk Analysis, *Risk Analysis* is ranked among the top 10 journals in the ISI Journal Citation Reports under the social sciences, mathematical methods category - and is designed to meet the need for organization, integration, and communication and provide a focal point for new developments in the field. The analysis of risk is being increasingly viewed as a field in itself, and the demand for a more orderly and formal treatment of risk is great. This international journal is committed to publishing critical empirical research, conference proceedings, and commentaries dealing with risk issues.

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