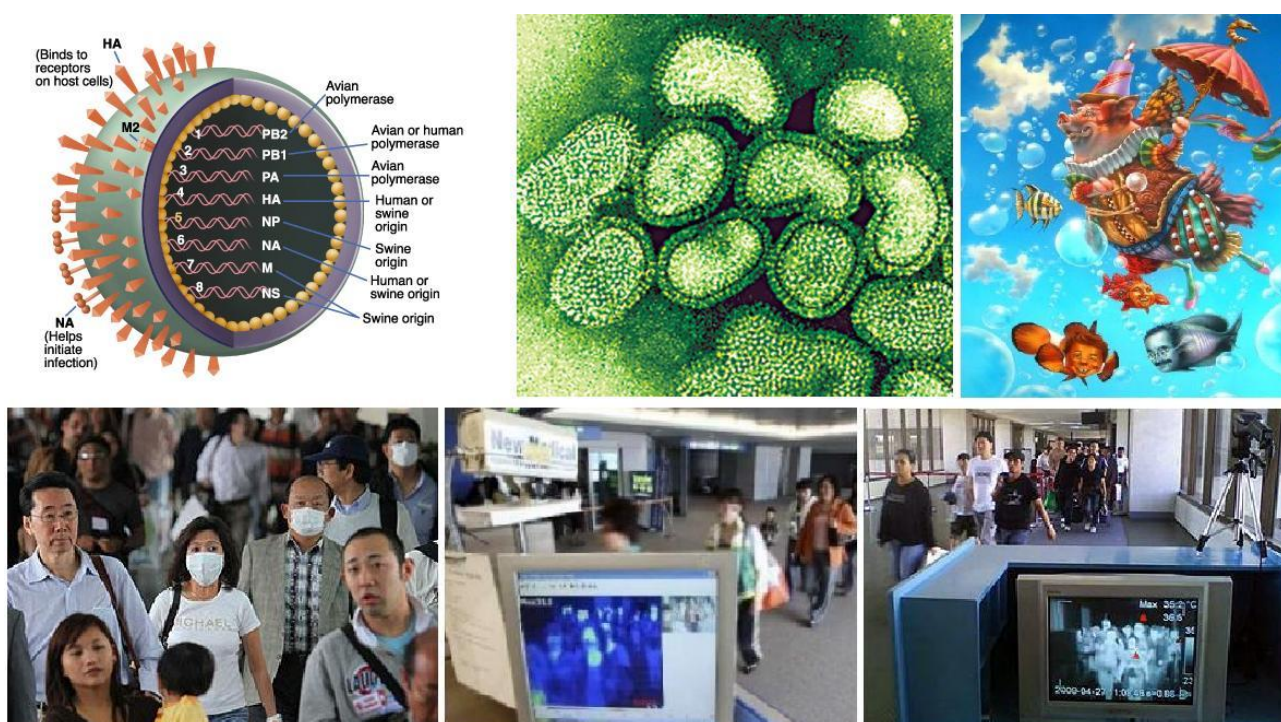


OCR GCSE Geographical Investigation B562

Explain the spread of Swine Flu across the world.



<http://midfield.files.wordpress.com/2009/04/swine-flu-montage1.jpg>

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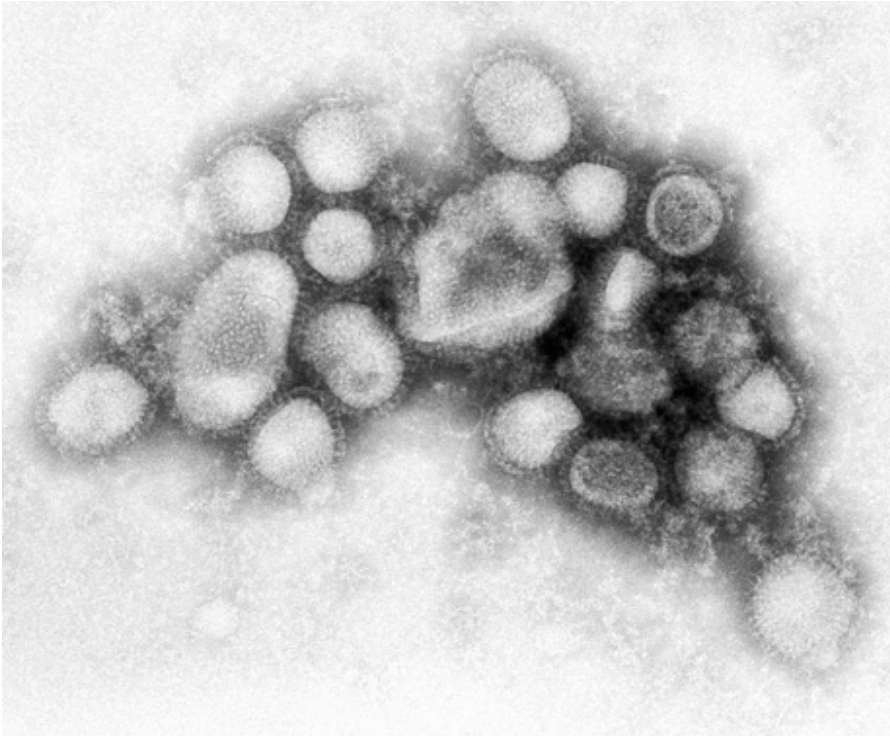
Swine Flu is very much in the news with a fear that it will turn into a pandemic. I am going to try to tackle the task by answering the key questions I have identified in my "thought shower". (figure 1)

Level 3

They have followed a logical and very explicit route to their enquiry.

What is Swine Flu?

In June 2009, W.H.O declared that the flu outbreak was due to a new strain of swine-origin H1N1. This strain is commonly called "**swine flu**" by the public media. It is called swine flu because it is thought to have originated in pigs, but this is not certain.



http://news.nationalgeographic.co.uk/news/2009/05/images/090504-swine-flu-picture_big.jpg

This is an electron microscope image of the swine flu virus.

What are its symptoms?

The typical symptoms from the NHS are:

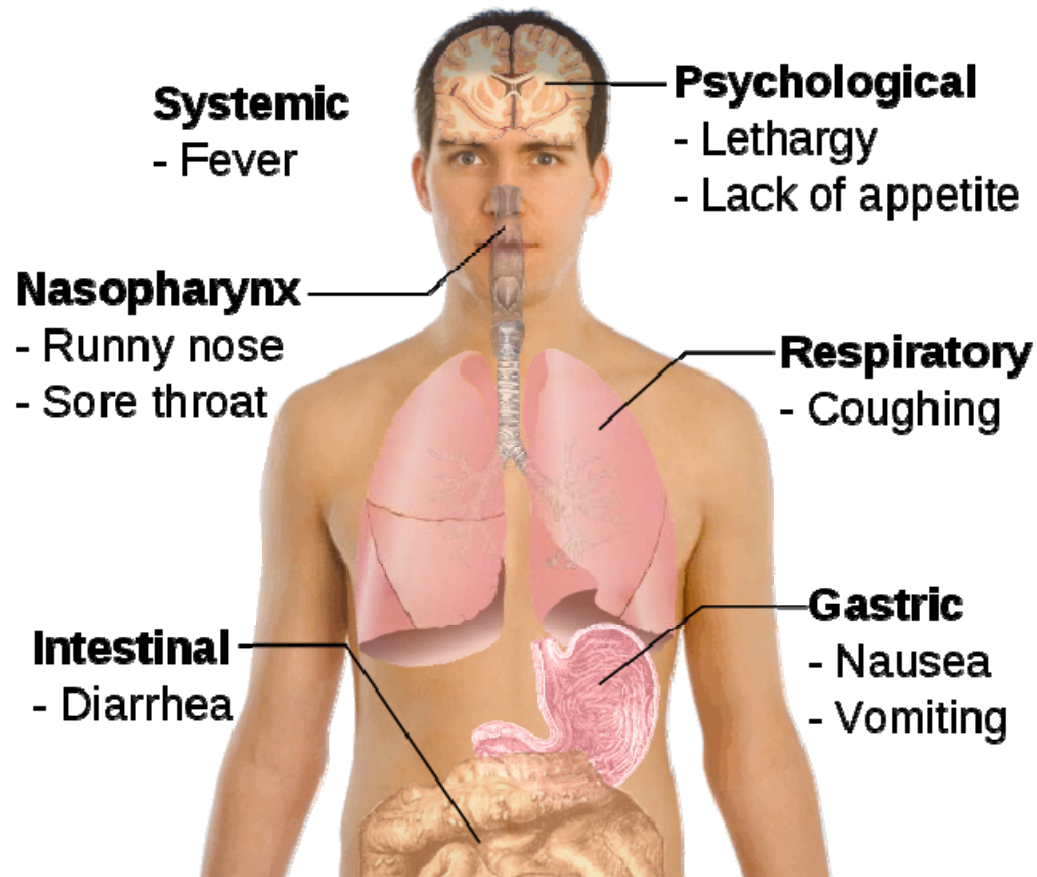
- a sudden fever (a high body temperature of 38°C/100.4°F or above), and
- a sudden cough.

Other symptoms may include:

- headache,
- tiredness,
- chills,
- aching muscles,
- limb or joint pain,
- diarrhoea or stomach upset,
- sore throat,
- runny nose,
- sneezing, or
- loss of appetite.

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Pandemic-flu/Pages/Symptoms.aspx>

Symptoms of **Swine flu**



<http://mexicoinstitute.files.wordpress.com/2009/07/swine-flu-symptoms.png>

These symptoms are very similar to regular seasonal Flu and most people recover within a week even without treatment. However, this new strain has caused deaths, is very contagious and this is why it is being treated so seriously by organisations and governments around the world.

Where and when did it start and spread to?

This new strain is thought to have originated in Mexico in April 2009. It spread rapidly across the world as this series of maps illustrate:

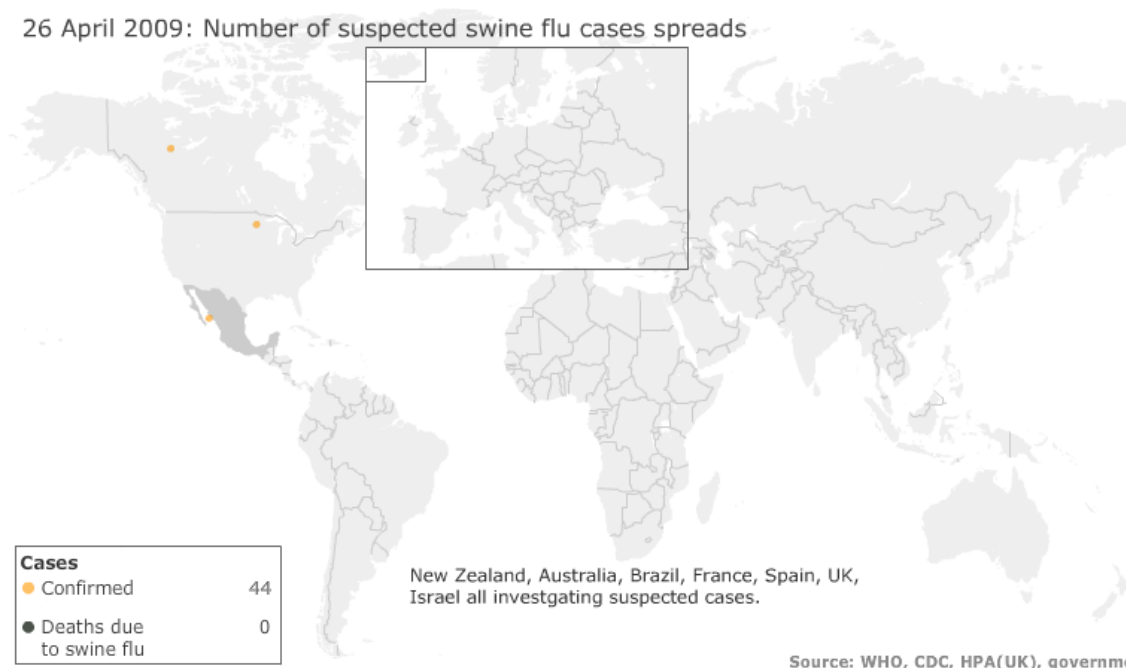
23 April 2009



Source: WHO, CDC, HPA(UK), government

It started in Mexico and then spread north into its neighbour the USA.

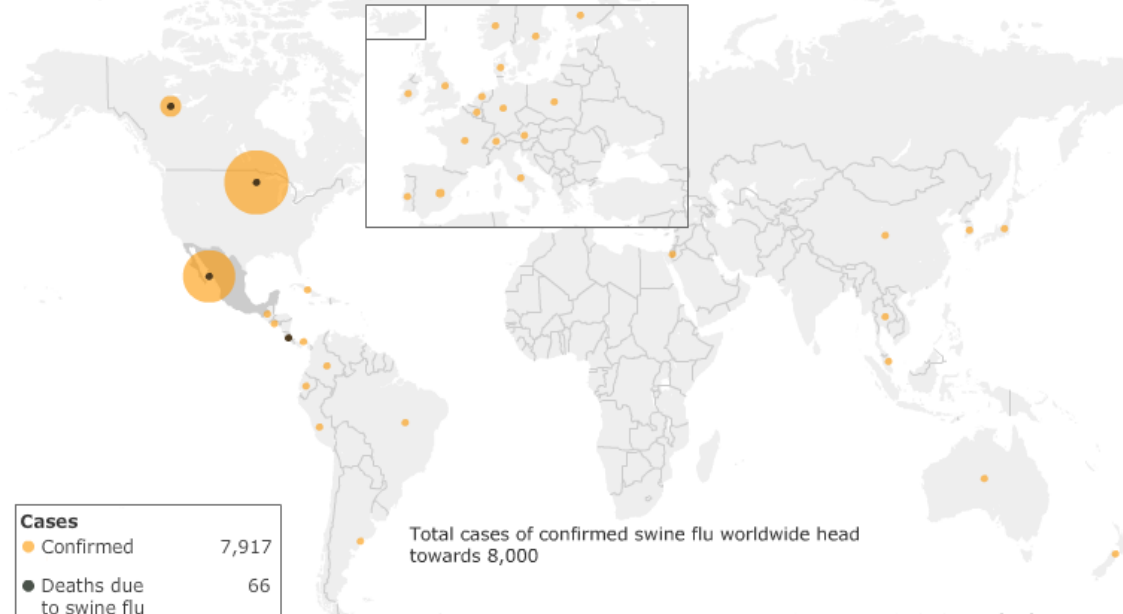
26 April 2009: Number of suspected swine flu cases spreads



Source: WHO, CDC, HPA(UK), government

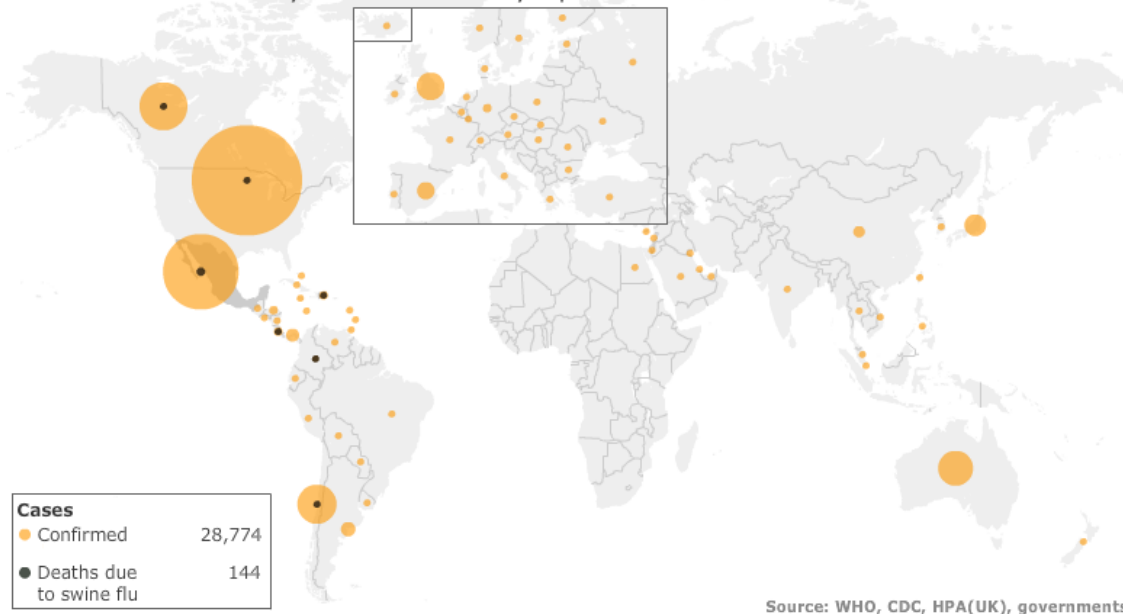
From the USA it spread north again into Canada.

15 May 2009: Belgium, Malaysia and Ecuador report first cases of swine flu



By May 15th it had spread more rapidly and widely out of North America into S America, Europe and even further afield into Asia and Australasia. A massive spike in the number of confirmed cases in Australia caused the WHO to officially call it a **pandemic**.

11 June 2009: WHO says swine flu officially a pandemic



<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/8083179.stm>

It spread from Mexico into USA and then into Europe and the rest of the world. It did so because of Globalisation with tourists and business people flying internationally. These people by the nature of their activities are in close proximity to local people and themselves. They visit restaurants, offices and museums and fly together in aeroplanes. This has meant that it has spread rapidly across the world. This has caused a major fall in tourism world wide and airports are even using heat sensing cameras to see if people might have a fever. If they do they are not allowed entry and are put into quarantine.

Why has it happened?

The exact reason why it has occurred is still being investigated. However the consensus is that the virus contains genetic material that is found in strains that affect humans, birds and swine. Although the strain may have originated in pigs, it is now a wholly human disease.

Who is involved?

The first victim was thought to be a 4 year old Mexican boy called Edgar Hernandez from La Gloria. This is a picture of him.



<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/apr/27/swine-flu-search-outbreak-source>

The virus has led to a vast range of people being involved. The obvious ones are health workers, governments and the World Health Organisation. In fact no walk of life seems to be immune with school children and pregnant women falling victim. However, there is some evidence that people over the age of 50 are less likely to catch the virus and might have some immunity.

The first UK death was a Scottish woman:

Family devastated by death of Scottish swine flu victim

“The prematurely born son of Jacqui Fleming, the mother who died yesterday from swine flu, has also died tonight.” <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/jun/15/scotland-swine-flu-death-woman> This was reported on the 15th of June 2009. Guardian reporter.

How can it be treated and prevented?

Governments worldwide have made preparations to contain and prevent the spread of such a virus since the last one, Avian Flu. The UK government has a stockpile of **Tamiflu**:



http://www.24dash.com/media/image/2009/06/02/14873/380_Image_PA_swine_flu.jpg

It also has a campaign for people to be more careful about their personal hygiene.



*Level 2
They have shown how different stakeholders have reacted to the issue.*

“Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, Catch it, Bin it, Kill it “

UK Government Medical Director. This is the advice being given in the UK to try and prevent the spread of swine flu.

<http://www.nhs.uk/news/2009/04April/Pages/Swineflulatest.aspx?WT.srch=1>

The government has also tried to contain outbreaks by closing schools and giving students and staff **Tamiflu**.



http://i.dailymail.co.uk/i/pix/2009/05/05/article-1176873-04CD5BC4000005DC-73_468x345.jpg

*Level 3
A wide range (10) of clearly relevant sources
have been used.
All sources of information have been
acknowledged.*

Alleyns was the first UK school closed, unfortunately when a student in my school had swine flu the government had changed its policy and we were not closed!

What is likely to happen in the future?

It is thought that the first peak of the virus has been reached, but will come back in the northern hemisphere this autumn and winter. This is the normal pattern of flu viruses. It is hoped that a vaccine will have been developed by September and mass vaccination will occur as soon as drug companies can produce the required large doses.

An evaluation of the sources I have used. See Figure 2 Research diary

I have used a wide variety of sources as can be seen in my research diary (figure 2). I found the BBC and NHS very useful as they were continually being updated. The BBC has correspondents in nearly every country of the world and has a reputation of being accurate and impartial. The NHS is an official government body and has to be accurate in giving advice and information. I found the W.H.O difficult to navigate and understand as it was at times very technical. I found newspapers useful in getting personal accounts, headlines and photographs.

Level 3

They have critically evaluated their evidence.

Conclusion

My world maps show that Swine Flu has spread across the world and become a Pandemic because of several factors. Firstly it is very contagious and is spread easily in the air or on surfaces. People in Mexico in restaurants, public places, locals, businessmen or tourists caught the disease in these ways. Secondly international air travel allowed people to travel home quickly before the symptoms became severe. It then spread rapidly within in short period of time across the world (2 cases in 26 April 2009 to 28,774 in June 11 with 144 deaths). This happened before Governments and health authorities could coordinate prevention and drug companies could produce a vaccine.

Level 3

*An informed conclusion is made
substantiated with research evidence.*

Level 3

Their spelling, grammar and punctuation are accurate. They have written with precision and succinctness and are just within the word limit.

Overall this investigation is of a level 3 standard in both the application of knowledge and understanding, and analysis and evaluation. The only level 2 element is the stakeholders where more could have been given and reasoned. In terms of marks it would be 20/24 and this would be an A grade.