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Deputy Peadar Tóibín  
Dáil Éireann,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2

**Re: PQ46964/22 To ask the Minister for Health if his Department has undertaken any research into the avian flu HPAI; if the flu poses a risk to humans; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Tóibín

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question which has been referred by the Minister for Health to the Health Service Executive for direct response.

Avian influenza (AI) is a viral disease that produces disease in poultry and wildfowl. Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) comprises a group of influenza viruses that rapidly produce severe disease and high rates of death in birds. A range of these virus can potentially spread from birds to humans; A(H5N1) and A(H7N9) viruses have caused the majority of avian influenza A virus infections in people. The A(H5) and A(H7) strains have a high mortality rate in humans, but spread to humans has been very limited and there has yet been any significant spread from person to person.

HPSC has produced a range of [information, advice and guidance material on Avian Influenza](#), most especially in relation to the immediate public health actions to be taken on notification of AI in birds in Ireland, including the steps that professionals and general public must take to protect themselves from AI and a dynamic risk assessment model for the management of professionals and members of the public who may have been exposed to infected birds, supported by a raft of ancillary documentation.

Research into AI viruses in poultry and wildfowl in Ireland is conducted by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) and its agencies. Research into the effective Public Health response preventing transmission of the recent H5N1 variant identified in domesticated birds to humans has been undertaken, highlighting that collaboration between public health and DAFM at regional and national levels was key to rapid response to these outbreaks.

A multidisciplinary joint Public Health/DAFM Committee was established some time ago to monitor the global and national AI situation, to prepare and update guidance in relation to this issue and to make recommendations where necessary.

If you require any further information or clarification please do contact us.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'GM', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Dr Gregory Martin**  
**Interim Director of HPSC**  
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