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A comprehensive evidence review to inform a potential recommendation on the use of human influenza A(H5) vaccines in Germany

Inhalt

Background
Unprecedented avian influenza A(H5) activity occurred among wild birds, poultry and some wild mammals across Europe in 2025/26. Given pandemic risks from zoonotic infections, the German Standing Committee on Vaccination (STIKO) reviewed evidence to inform possible national use of A(H5) vaccines.
Methods
Following its standard procedure, STIKO reviewed surveillance data on disease burden and conducted a systematic review (SR) on safety/efficacy of EU-approved A(H5) vaccines. Experiences from countries with existing programmes informed acceptability and implementation considerations.
Results
In 2025/26, >240 A(H5)-outbreaks in poultry and >3,100 -detections in wild birds were reported in Germany. 110 human infections were confirmed globally in occupationally exposed individuals in 2024/25, none in Germany or the EU. Three human A(H5) vaccines are licensed in the EU. The SR screened 2,085 records and included one study showing 54-80% seroconversion after two doses of CELLDEMIC, with mild-to-moderate transient reactions. Vaccine uptake in Finland and Canada was challenged by low-risk perception and mistrust.
Conclusions
Substantial A(H5) activity in Europe, and possible (severe) human infections and viral adaptation with pandemic potential support the relevance of a recommendation for at-risk groups. The evidence-review provided valuable insights for assessment of emerging pathogens and implementation of potential recommendations for pandemic preparedness in Germany.

Keywords

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Senior Scientist

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No, I am not a junior scientist.

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