

## H1N1 Update – May 5, 2009 (Cinco de Mayo)

On the day that celebrates the defeat of the French army in the city of Puebla, a day that is mostly celebrated in Puebla, Mexico and in the United States - but not in the rest of Mexico-the following quote from Laurie Garrett might be of interest.

'It's the classic problem in public health, trying to prove a negative. If, after an intervention, nothing happens, then everybody says, "What was the big deal?"

'But the course swine flu will take in the Southern Hemisphere - and, this coming fall, in the Northern Hemisphere - still isn't clear. And it's worth considering what might have happened if public health officials hadn't sounded the alarm.

'I think the whole world should be saying, "Gracias, amigos," to the Mexicans for the tremendous sacrifice they have made. That may have stopped what otherwise would have been a serious pandemic.

'Some people will look back and say: 'Wasn't that ridiculous? Didn't we overreact?' But in New Orleans, wouldn't we have preferred an overreaction that built too many levees too tall, than doing nothing and allowing the city to be flooded?'

*Laurie Garrett, senior fellow for global health at the Council on Foreign Relations and the author of "The Coming Plague: Newly Emerging Diseases in a World Out of Balance " (Penguin, 1995).  
Published in the New York Times, May 5, 2009*

In other news... Dr. Eugene Ciccone, MD, Director of Health, New Britain Health Department and I taped a segment today on the history of influenza and tips on how to prepare for a public health emergency, including the pandemic flu. It is scheduled to be shown on Nutmeg TV, Channel 5 tomorrow, May 6, at 7:00 p.m. It will also be aired during the "Doctor is In" segment with Noreen Zurell on May 9, at 6:00 p.m., May 11, at 6:30 p.m. and May 12, at 10:30 p.m.

L. Abrahamson, May 5, 2009 11:00 p.m.



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