





Tracking the evolution of avian influenza viruses: are we maximizing the use of the information we have?

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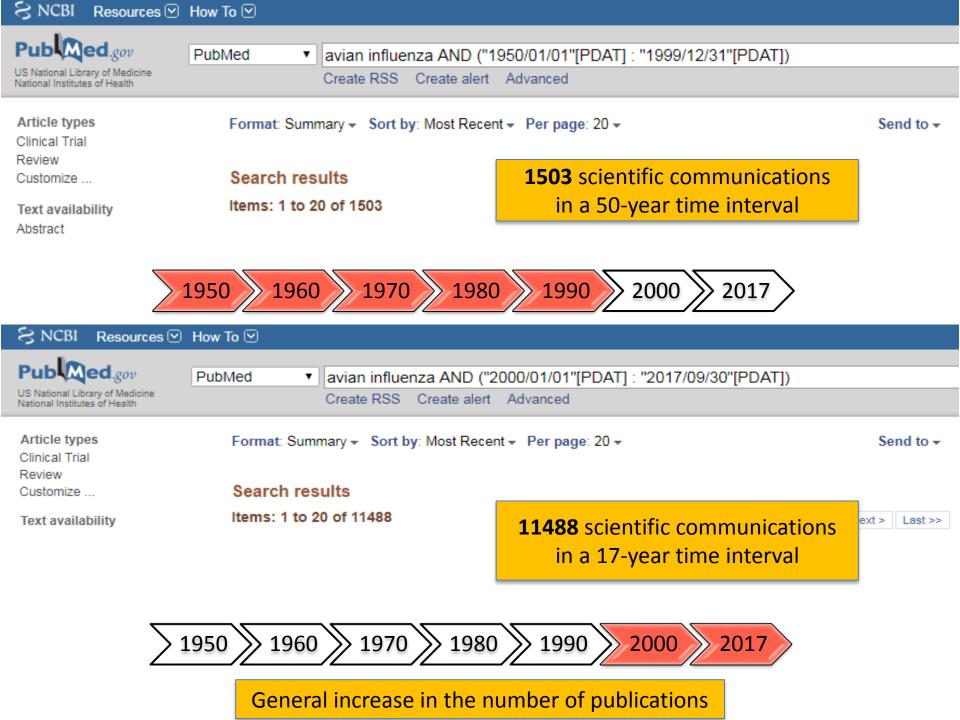
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In the framework of the G7 CVOs Meeting

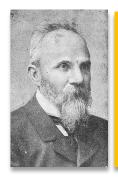
Conference "Avian Influenza. A Global Threat"



The evolution of our awareness of the importance of AIVs for animal and human health



1503 scientific communications 1950 1960 1970 1980 1990 2000 2017



For over 100 years, HPAI was believed to be a poultry disease of rare occurrence which, in most cases, could cause only a limited number of outbreaks. Minor zoonotic impact



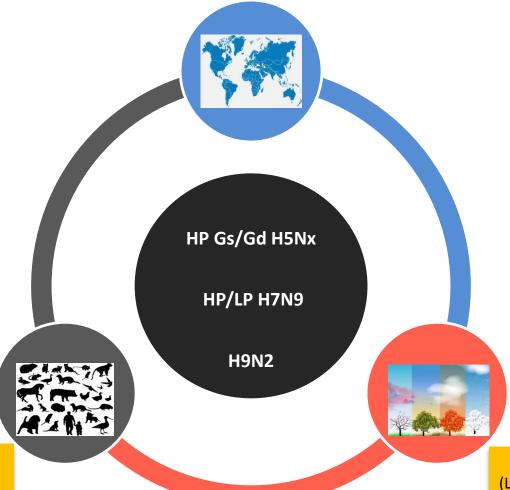
R-Evolution observed in the epidemiological and ecological dynamics of AI



Transcontinental spread most probably through wild birds (H5Nx)

VS

Transcontinental spread most probably through poultry trade (H9N2 G1)



Mild symptoms in humans (H9N2 G1)

VS

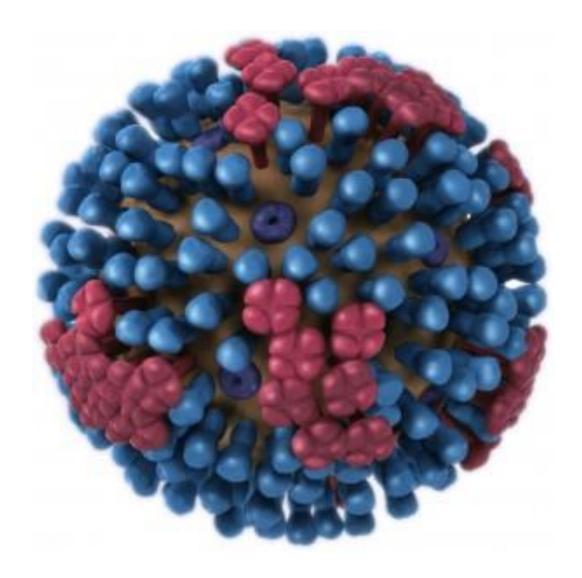
@40% of people confirmed with Asian H7N9 virus infection died

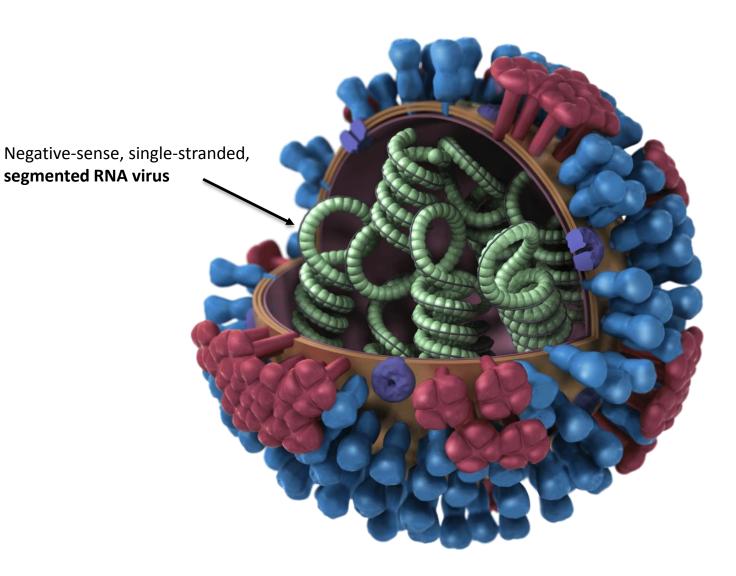
Seasonal patterns (LPAI H7N9 in humans)

VS

Continued transmission in poultry (H5Nx) What is driving the high phenotypic diversity of avian influenza viruses?

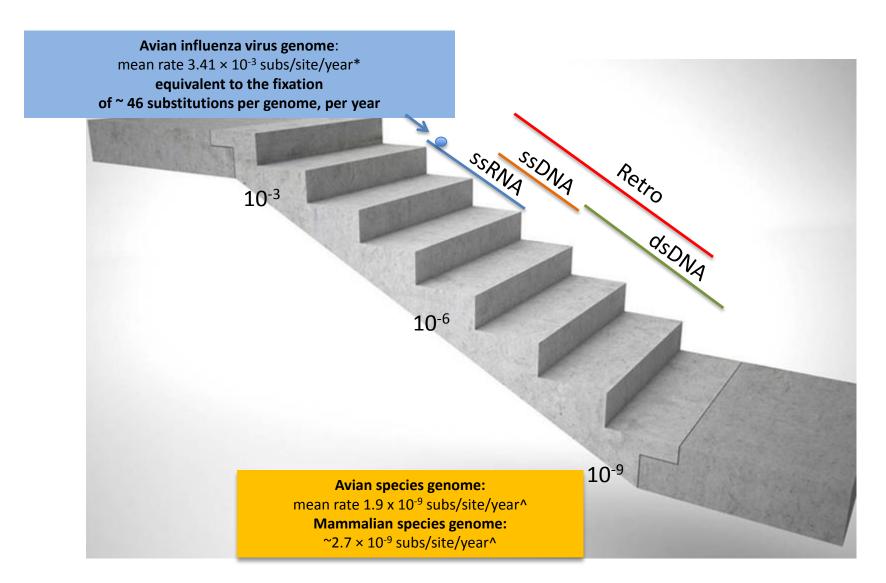






Rapid evolutionary dynamics

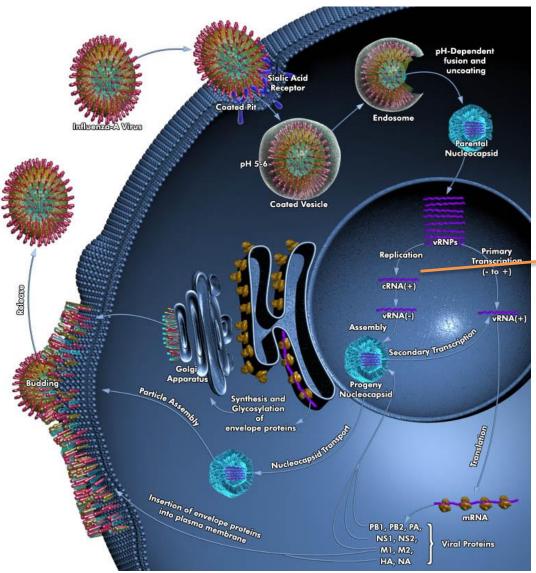
High evolutionary rate (number of mutations that become fixed in the genome of a population over time)



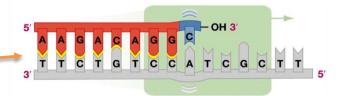
^{*}Chen and Holmes, 2006 Mol Biol Evol 23(12):2336-2341;

[^]Zhang et al 2014 *Science*. Science. 2014 Dec 12; 346(6215): 1311–1320

Inherent characteristics predisposing to the observed high evolutionary rate



RNA polymerase is error prone: low fidelity of the polymerases used in replication (no proofreading capability)



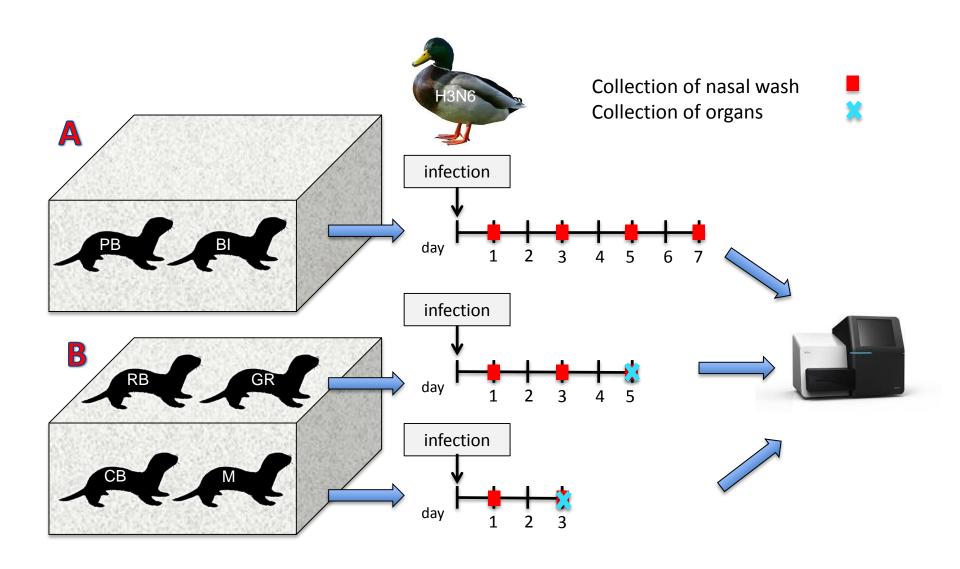
Viral generation time (replication **speed**)

https://www.qiagen.com/fi/shop/genes-and-pathways/pathway-details/?pwid=247

Selection forces driving the evolution of AI selection

Host range





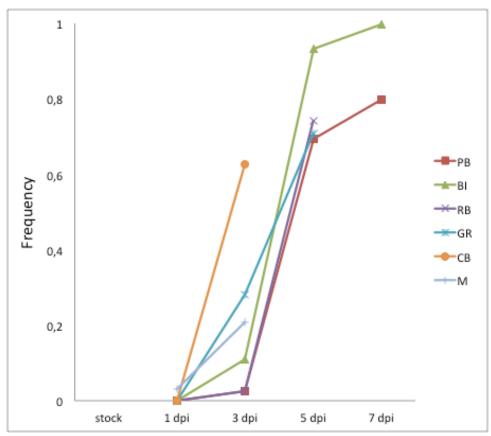






Avian-to-mammal adaptation marker (HA gene)

receptor binding specificity ψ α -2,3 sialic acids (main receptors of birds)



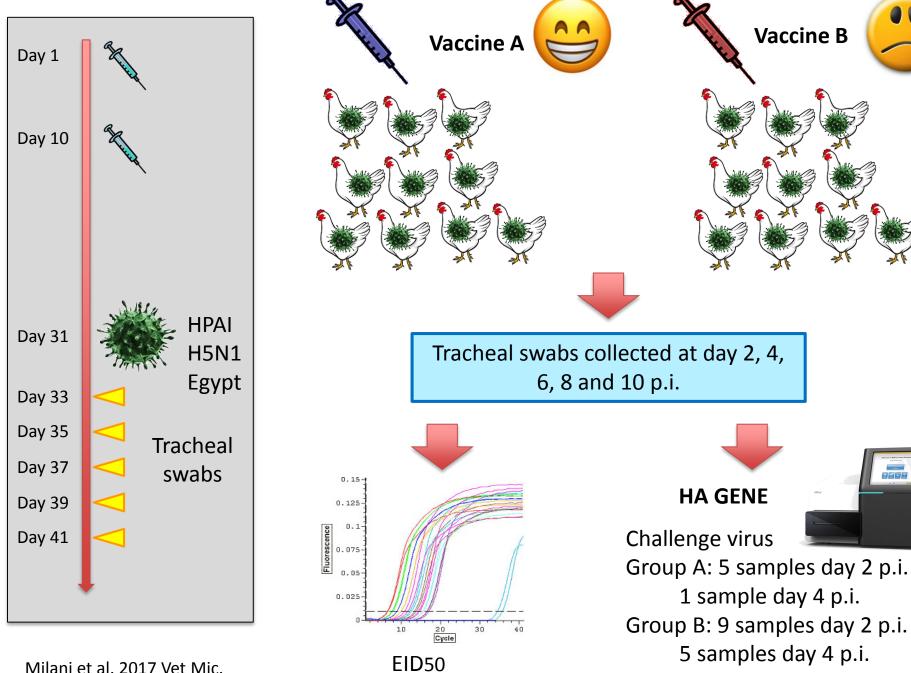
Since the early stages of virus replication, selective pressure has promoted accumulation of mutations, important for adaptation to mammalian host

Selection forces driving the evolution of AI selection

- Host range
- Host immunity

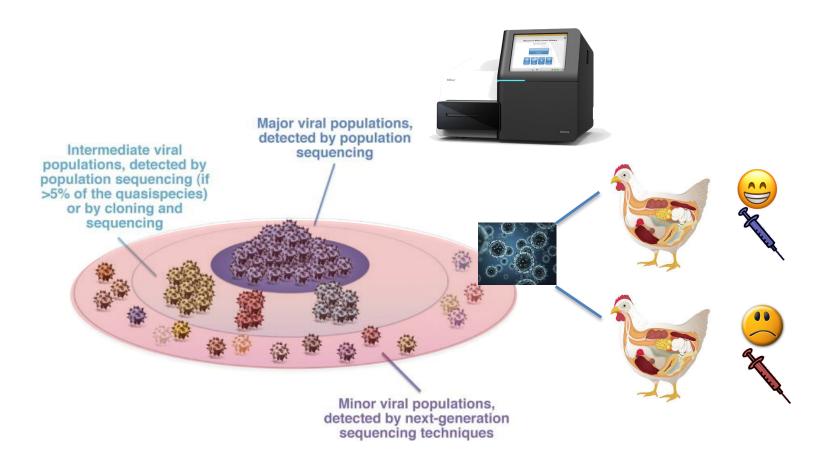


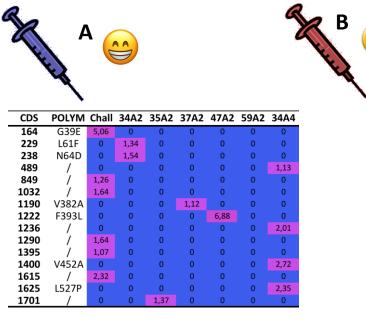
Impact of the vaccine immune pressure on the evolution of avian influenza virus PAGGINE



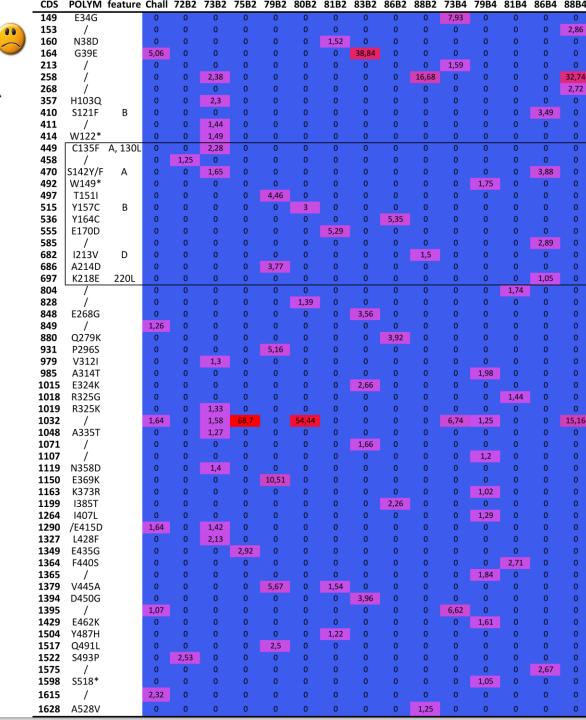
Milani et al. 2017 Vet Mic.

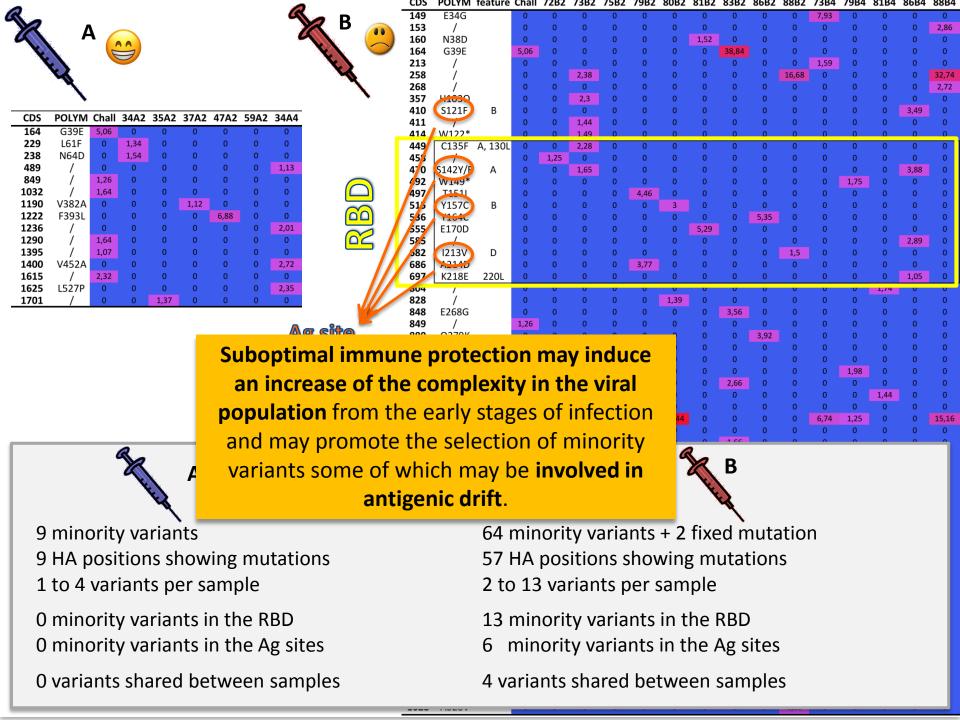
Characterization of the complexity of the viral population





Analysis of genetic polymorphisms





Selection forces driving the evolution of AI selection

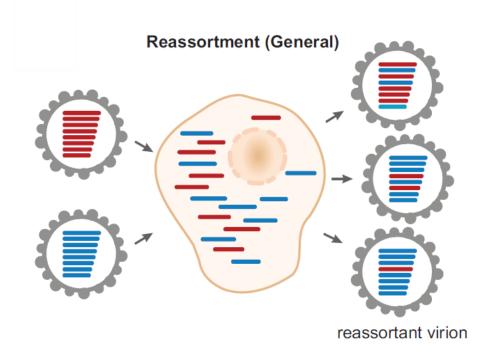
- Host range
- Host immunity
- Eco-environmental factors (i.e., farm type, land use, population size, control measures such as the use of antiviral treatments)



Inherent characteristics predisposing to the high diversity of AI viruses

Genome Structure

8 interchangeable RNA molecules: reassortment has the potential to vastly increase the diversity of circulating influenza viruses

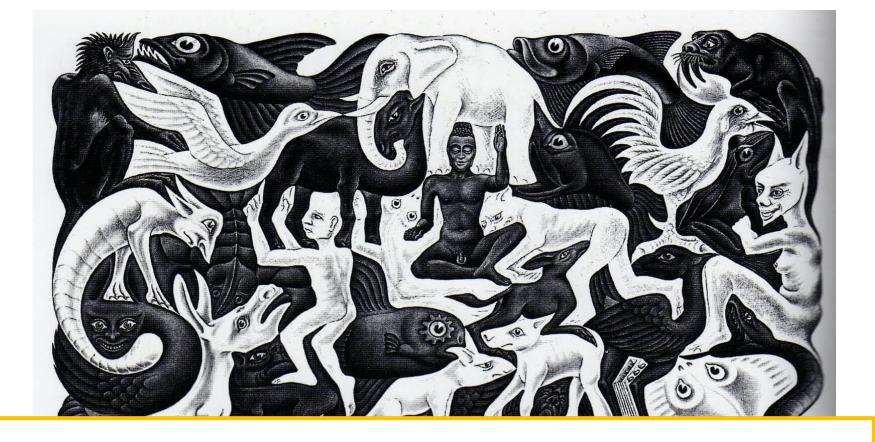




Many birds are inextricably entwined in the puzzle of influenza A viruses.

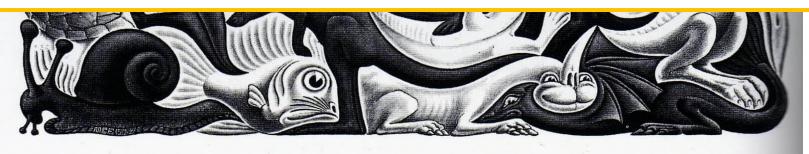
Avian-Avian Reassortment





Many species are inextricably entwined in the puzzle of influenza viruses.

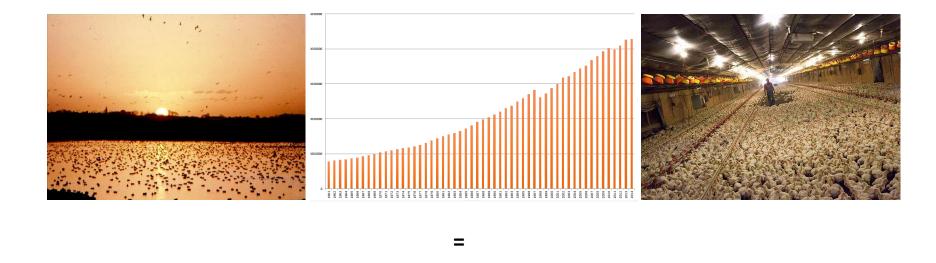
Reassortment Between Avian And Mammalian Viruses



Virus intrinsic ability to accumulate genetic diversity

+

host populations size



- endless variety of new viruses with potentially new properties
- difficulty to control their spread and need for tailored control measures





High mutation rates make evolution of AI happening right in front of our eyes, facilitating the reconstruction of emergence, transmission and spread dynamics thanks to the exploitation of genetic and epidemiological data.

An age of genomic plenty: Next-generation evolutionary epidemiology





R-Evolution in Sequencing technologies

Discovery of DNA structure by Watson and Crick [1953]

First Generation Sequencing

- Maxam-Gilbert sequencing [1977]
- Sanger Sequencing [1977]
 - Gel-based systems
- Capillary sequencing [1998]

Next (or Second) Generation Sequencing (NGS)

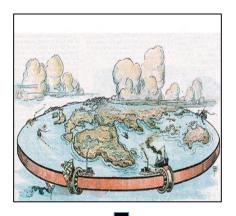
- Massively parallel sequencing [2005/2006/2007/2011]
- 454 / Roche sequencing
- Illumina (Solexa) sequencing
- SOLiD systems
- Ion Torrent sequencing

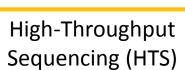
Third Generation Sequencing

- Single molecule sequencing [2013]
- PacBio RS II (Pacific Biosciences)
- MinION (Oxford Nanopore)

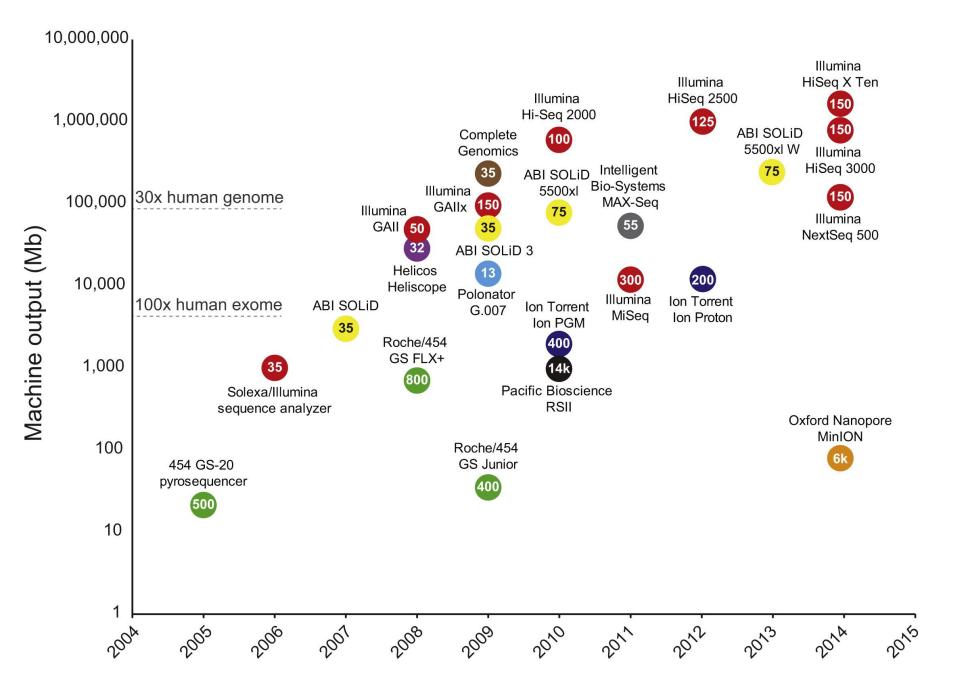
Fourth generation sequencing

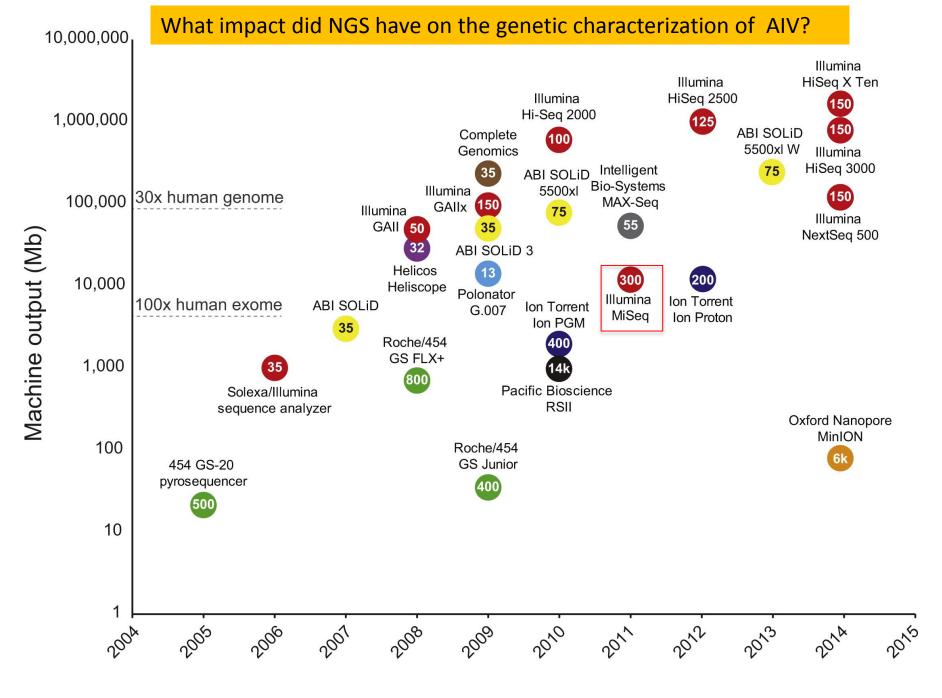
- in situ sequencing [2013]
- Fluorescent in situ sequencing (FISSEQ) ReadCoor
- Spatial transcriptomics











Sequencing an Influenza A virus full genome (13.5Kb) at a FAO/OIE reference center/lab (IZSVe)



1st Generation Sequencing (Sanger)

Time: @ 2 weeks

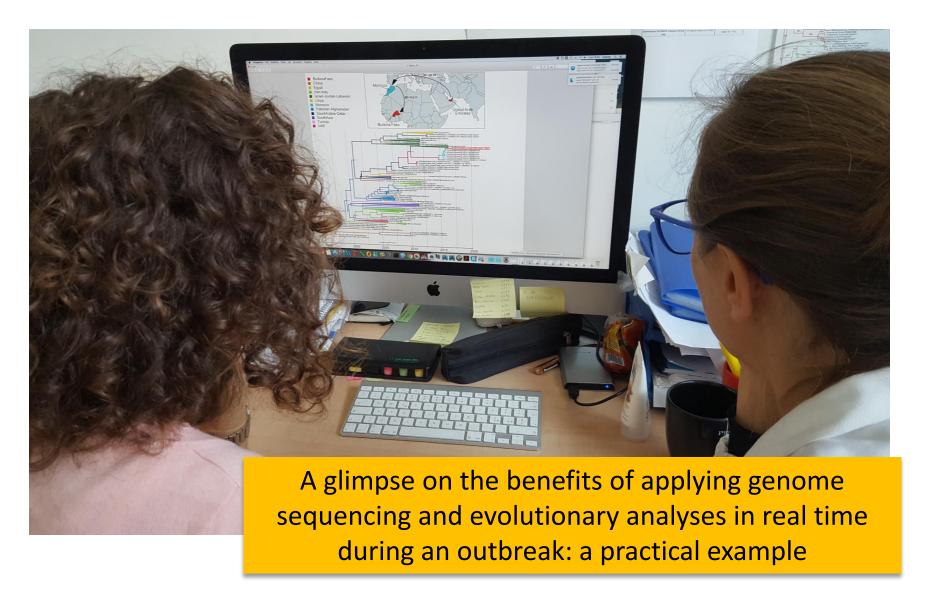
Cost: @340 \$

2nd Generation Sequencing (Illumina MiSeq)

Time: 3 days

Cost: @70 \$







Identification of the H9N2 subtype in West Africa

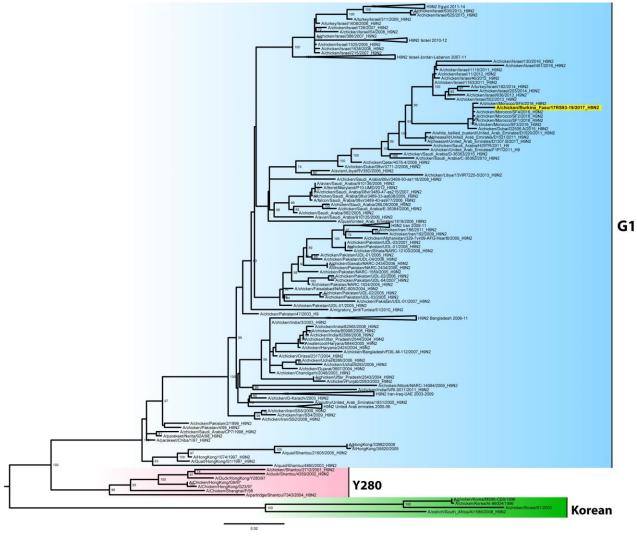
February 2017: a layer farm experiencing decreased egg production and respiratory signs was found positive for the H9N2 AIV



Practical uses of genome sequences

Data provided rapidly (in real-time) in case of an outbreak

• Which type of H9 lineage had infected the farm? The G1, Y280 or Y439 (Korean) lineage?



G1 lineage:

- detected in humans
- well adapted to galliformes

Practical uses of genome sequences

Data provided rapidly (in real-time) in case of an outbreak

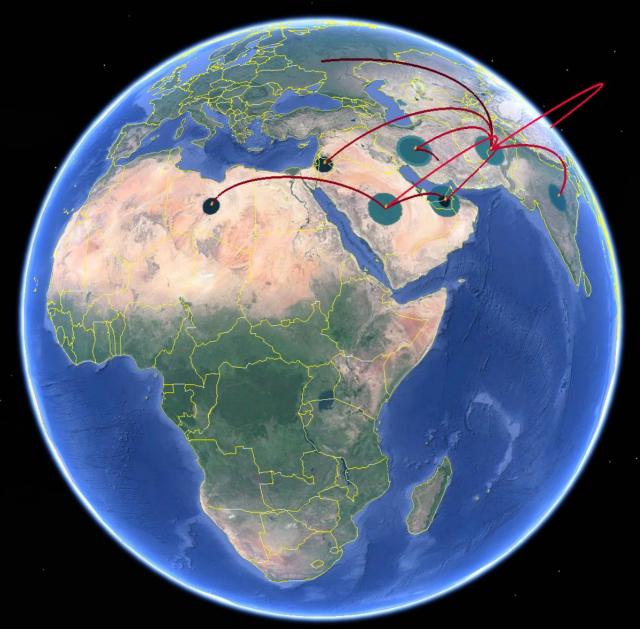
• Where did the virus come from?

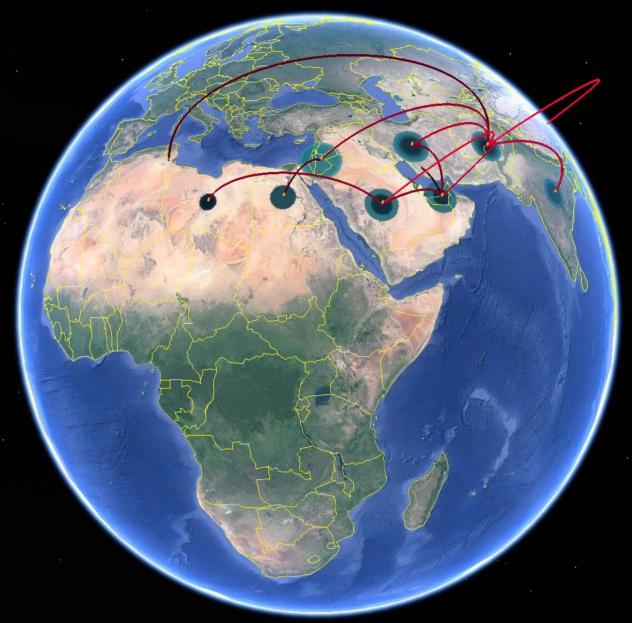


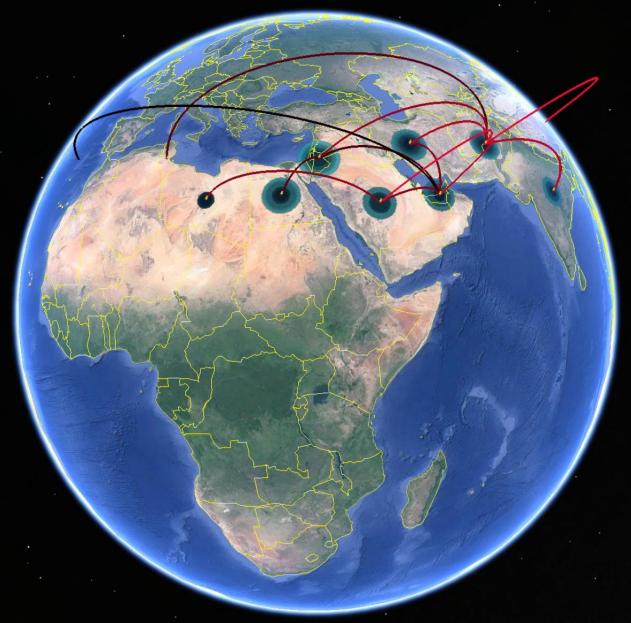


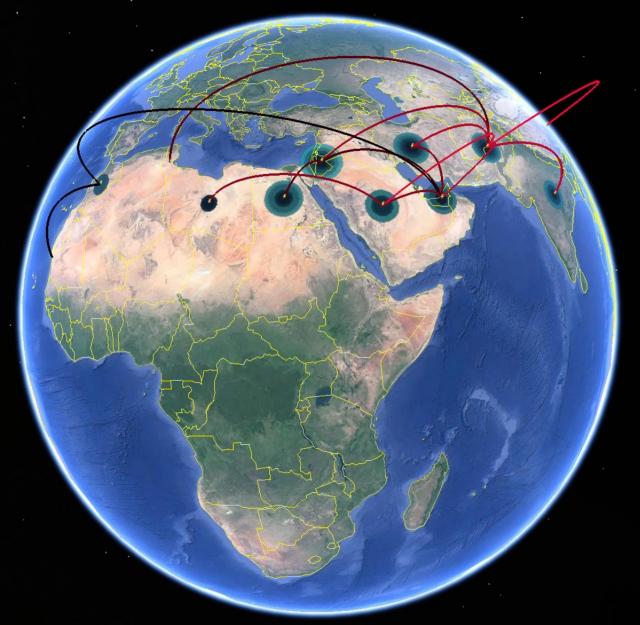
US Dept of State Geographer © 2017 Google Image Landsat / Copernicus Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO

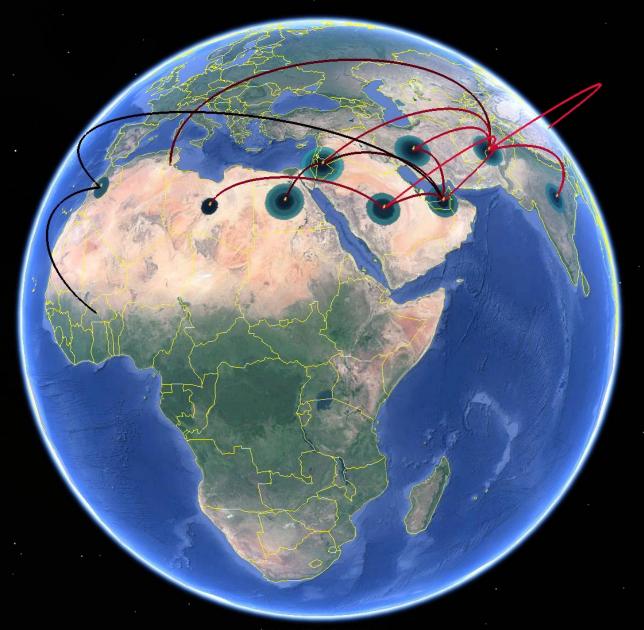






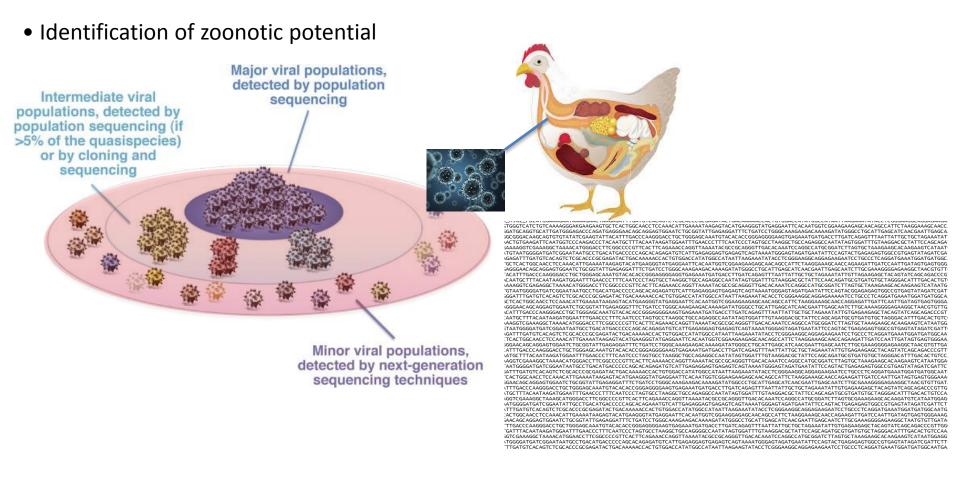






Practical uses of genome sequences

Data provided rapidly (in real-time) in case of an outbreak

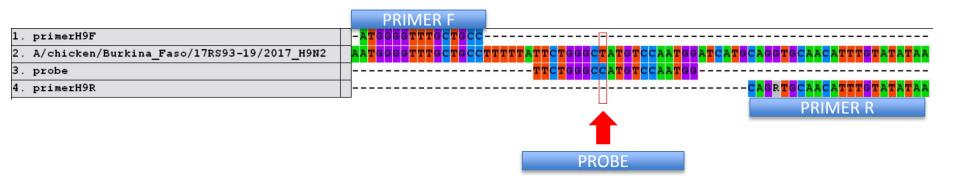


50% of the viral population possessed the amino acid Leucine at position 226 (H3 numbering) of the HA receptor binding site, which entails preferential binding to human-like α 2-6-linked sialic acid (SA α 2-6) receptors.

Practical uses of genome sequences

Data provided rapidly (in real-time) in case of an outbreak

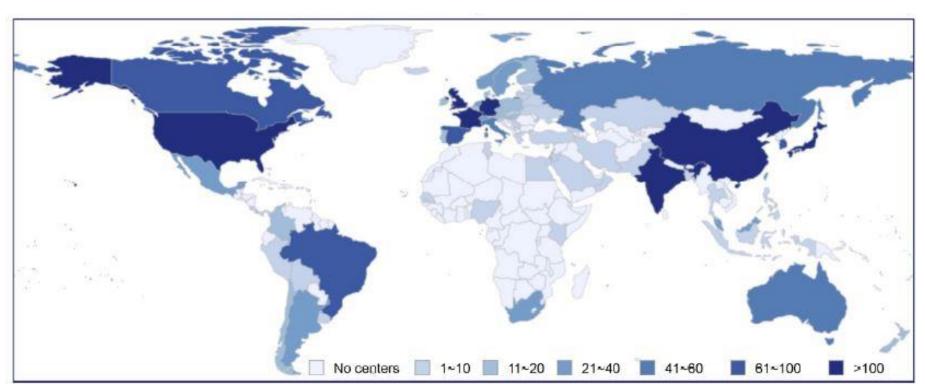
• Identification of mutations with diagnostic implications



The established RT-qPCRs need to be costantly evaluated and adapted. Fine tuning for improved performances during outbreaks is necessary



Technology accessibility: Sequencing centers over the world



As of November 2015

Avian influenza viruses have a global reach: possible actions for the sustainable development of genome sequencing technologies

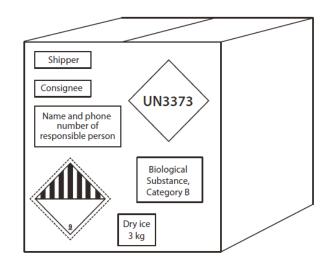
- Using modern sequencing technologies that minimize infrastructure requirements (i.e., MinION by Oxford Nanopore Technologies)
- Increasing research funds for genomic research
- Fostering international collaborations (crucial role for OIE/FAO reference lab/centres and OIE collaborating centers)



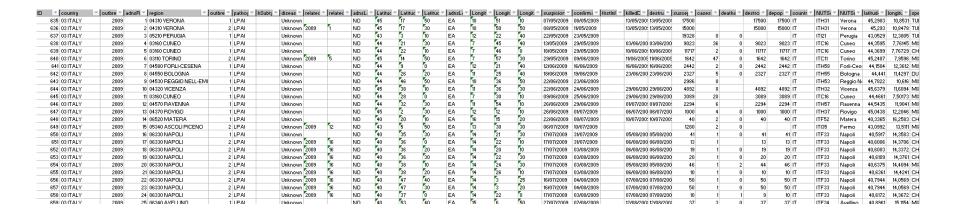


Obstacles to sample sharing and generation of evolutionary data

Sample shipment (cost, logistics)



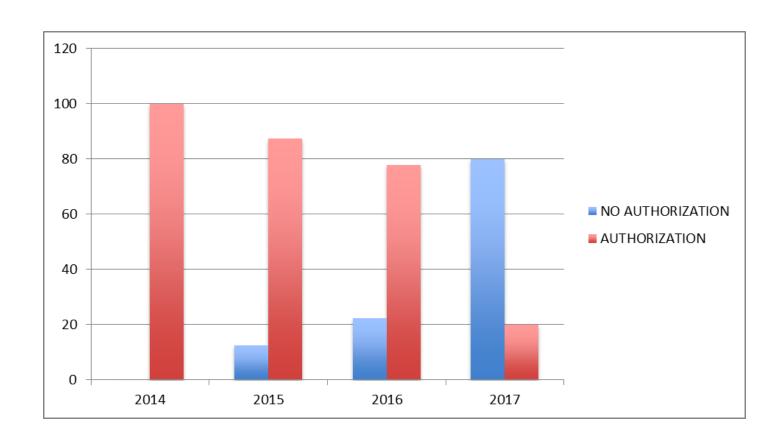
• Lack of metadata (i.e., date, location, species, farm type, clinical signs, biosecurity and control measures)



Obstacles to data sharing prevent the exploitation of the benefit of evolutionary analyses: considerations from an OIE/FAO RL/RC (IZSVe)



Immediate release of sequences in public databases in the last four years at a FAO/OIE RC/RL (IZSVe)





From the evolution of technology to understanding the evolution

- Avian influenza viruses have a truly global reach and cannot be fully understood by studies limited by a spatial or temporal range.
- In an increasingly connected world, rapid sequencing and standardized protocols to collect samples and data from outbreaks should be established.
- Investing in computational and genetic technologies will be essential to generate data which can be used to build tailored control systems and research agendas.

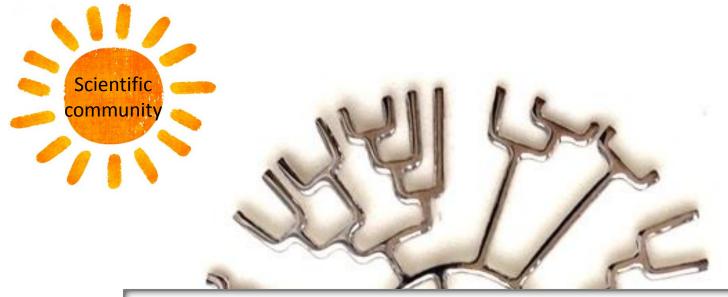


From the evolution of technology to understanding the evolution

- The greatest obstacle to understanding the full public health potential of influenza data is social, not technological.
- Global and multi-level efforts are essential (1) to educate to the benefits of virus and data sharing and (2) to develop universal guidelines to assure access to avian influenza viruses and data in real time







Access to globally aggregated outbreak information will transform our understanding of influenza epidemic dynamics





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Thank you for your attention!

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