WHO takes on global influenza threat

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Oberuzwil, Switzerland /LEIPZIG, Germany: Member of a working group set up by the World Health Organisation have agreed upon an international framework to enhance preparedness for influenza pandemics that threaten public health worldwide. The agreement, which is expected to provide clear legal regimes and responsibilities for all stakeholders involved in the prevention and management of pandemics, is the result of more than three years of negotiations which started back in 2007 during the height of the bird-flu influenza virus in Southeast Asia. It is expected to be ratified during the World Health Assembly in Geneva in Switzerland in May.

According to a joint statement, one of the key elements of the agreement will be an improved cooperation and exchange of information between key players such as the WHO, national laboratories and pharmaceutical manufacturers. Access to live-saving vaccines and other resources for low-income countries which often cannot produce or afford required anti-viral medication for their population is also supposed to be improved.

“This agreement promotes global health security and solidarity in pandemic times,” said Ambassador Bente Angell-Hansen, who also chaired the working group. “It also reflects a unique partnership with industry and contains concrete measures of cooperation with both industry and civil society.”

Owing to increasing global transportation, locally active influenza viruses exhibit an increasing potential to become global pandemics that risks the life of many including medical and dental professionals. According to latest estimates of the WHO, the H1N1-virus or swine flu that first occurred in Mexico in early 2009 has killed almost 20,000 people worldwide.

Periodontal treatment no harm to newborns

NEW YORK, USA/LEIPZIG, Germany: Pregnant women with gum disease may undergo non-surgical periodontal treatment without fear of consequences for their baby’s health.

In a large trial involving 400 infants between the ages of two and three from different paediatric clinics in the US, dental clinicians found that treating periodontitis during pregnancy did not affect the children’s cognitive, motor or language capabilities later in life.

In the study, clinicians from universities in Minnesota, Kentucky, Mississippi and New York compared development data of children born to women who were treated for gum disease before and after their delivery. However, the results between the control and experimental groups only differed slightly. Higher motor and cognitive scores were observed in the children of women who saw an improvement in their periodontal health.

Earlier studies indicated that paternal periodontal treatment