

Egypt swine-flu vaccine in pipeline

Contributed by Egypt News
Tuesday, 13 October 2009

Egypt's Minister of Health Hatem el-Gabali

Fears over the potentially devastating effects of a swine-flu pandemic in the poverty stricken slums of Cairo have spurred Egypt to develop its own vaccine against the H1N1 virus.

However, the vaccine will not be ready for production for another 18 months, according to Egyptian Minister of Health Hatem el-Gabali, so the country intends to import drugs to inoculate school children and key public workers.

Egypt has a population of 77 million, who mostly live in the densely packed Nile Valley, with many calling the crowded streets of the country's capital Cairo home.

Mr el-Gabali said a team of 35 experts who were trained overseas are working in independent laboratories around Egypt and have the needed skills to develop the vaccine.

"We have a plan to produce the first batch (of Egypt's swine flu vaccine) by April 2011," el-Gabali said.

Egypt has already been hard hit by the more deadly H5N1 bird flu virus and has recorded about 1,030 cases of swine flu, with three people dying from the virus.

EGYPT NEWS