

TORONTO — An experiment mating H5N1 avian flu viruses and a strain of human flu in a laboratory produced a surprising number of hybrid viruses that were biologically fit, a new study reveals.

And while none of the offspring viruses was as virulent as the original H5N1, about one in five were lethal to mice at low doses, showing they retained at least a portion of the power of their dangerous parent.

The work suggests that under the right circumstances - and no one is clear what all of those are - the two types of flu viruses could swap genes in a way that might allow the H5N1 virus to acquire the capacity to trigger a pandemic. That process is called reassortment.

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TVNL Comment: Check out Presidential Directive 51 and discover what would happen in the US should a pandemic of this sort occur. ☐ Surprise, surprise....!☐