

Table 1 Critical initial questions to address in the initial stages of investigation of a novel pathogen

| Question | Investigation |
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| Does human-to-human transmission occur? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Survey of exposed health care workers with serological and virological testing• Contact tracing of exposed family and social contacts supported by serological testing |
| What exposures result in infection? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interview of cases or proxies; case-control study of exposures |
| What is the source of the novel pathogen? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Virological and serological testing of animals, food stuffs; environmental sampling• Seroepidemiological surveys of specific human risk groups• Testing of stored animal clinical specimens |
| Is the pathogen new? When did it first appear? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of recent surveillance data, admission records and vital statistics data for the relevant clinical syndrome• Retrospective testing of stored clinical specimens from studies, surveillance or health care facility archives |