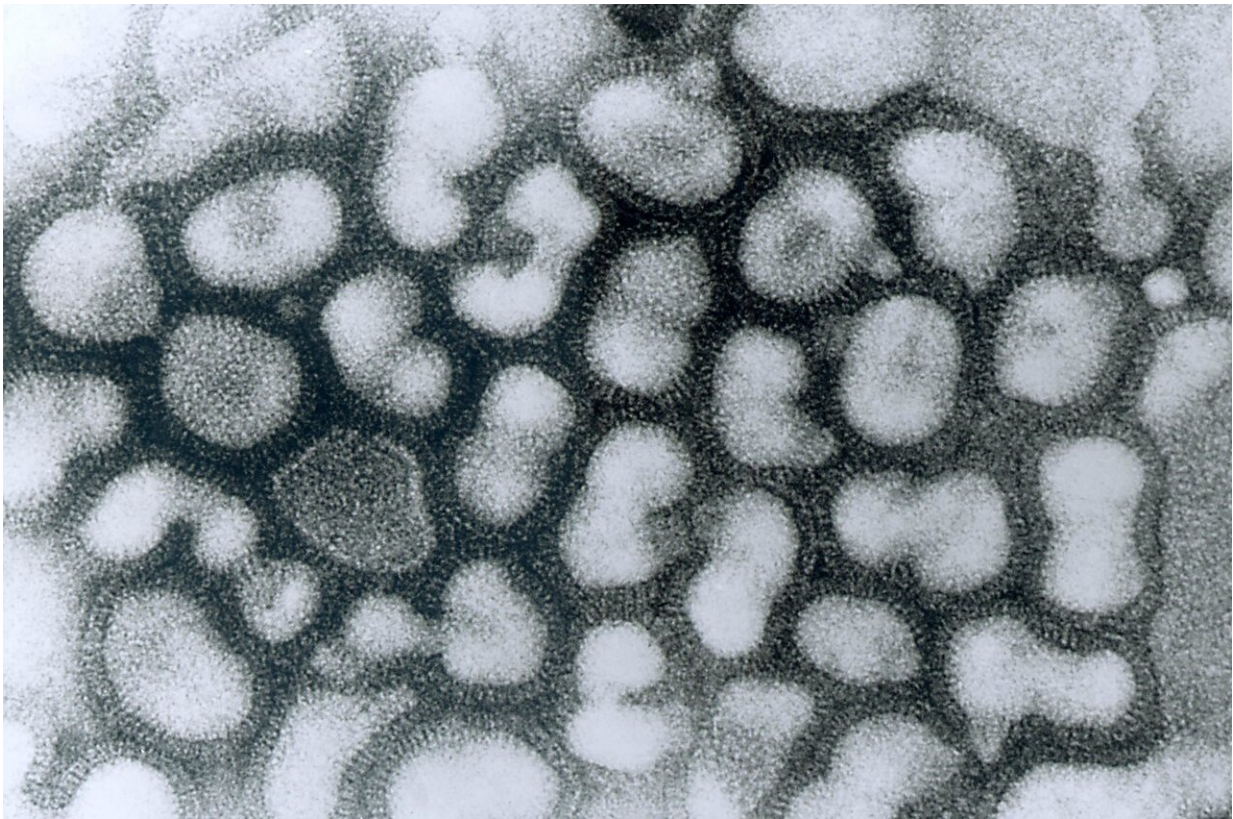


Many older adults hospitalized with the flu face persistent functional decline

December 9 2020



Transmission electron micrograph of influenza A virus, late passage. Credit: CDC

In a study of older adults admitted to the hospital with influenza and other acute respiratory illnesses during the 2011-2012 flu season,

functional decline was common—and for some, this decline was persistent and catastrophic. The findings are published in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*.

Among the 925 patients included in the study, 8.4% died, and 18.2% experienced a clinically meaningful loss of function at 30 days post-discharge, of whom half experienced catastrophic disability. Higher frailty at the time of [hospital](#) admission was associated with a higher likelihood of experiencing [functional decline](#), catastrophic disability, and death.

"We need to think about the longer-term implications of influenza for [older adults](#)—it is not just a short-term illness. This impact on function in the longer-term makes it all the more important to prevent influenza in the first place, including through vaccination," said lead author Melissa K. Andrew, MD, Ph.D., of Dalhousie University, in Canada.

More information: *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* (2020). DOI: [10.1111/jgs.16950](https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.16950)

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