

# RESPONSES TO AVIAN INFLUENZA EMERGENCY RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON PERCEIVED RISKS AND RELIABILITY OF INFORMATION SOURCES IN ANHUI PROVINCE, PR CHINA

Fei Wang<sup>1</sup>, Yu Yuan<sup>2</sup> and Shoufu Lin<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>International School of Business and Finance, Sun Yat-sen University, Zhuhai, PR China; <sup>2</sup>School of International and Public Affairs, Shanghai Jiaotong University, Shanghai, PR China; <sup>3</sup>School of Economics, Fujian Normal University, Fuzhou City, Fujian Province, PR China

**Abstract.** By the end of March 2013, emergence and rapid spread of a previously unknown variant of influenza A (H7N9) virus prompted public health authorities of China to implement appropriate mitigation and containment measures to protect public health. Data were collected from questionnaires distributed to inhabitants of Anhui Province, China. Individual's responses to infection routes, recommended protective actions and information sources were assessed by factor analysis, inter-rater agreement and multivariate analysis of variance. Major findings were: i) regarding knowledge of possible infection routes, recommended protective actions were considered to have a major impact; ii) rank ordering of exposure paths were identified; and iii) level of inter-rater agreement for hazard-related attributes was greater compared to resource-related attributes, but agreement on the two attributes was greater than behavioral expectations. The results call for a better understanding of public perceptions of exposure paths because it will be of great benefit for public health authorities in developing future control measures of epidemic flu. In addition, it is very essential for local officials to use segmentation strategies to disseminate individualized messages to each subgroup that can be divided based on the assessment on public's perceptions of two attributes of protective actions and three attributes of information sources.

**Keywords:** avian influenza, protective action, risk perception

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Correspondence: Shoufu Lin, School of Economics, Fujian Normal University, Fuzhou City 350007, Fujian Province, People's Republic of China  
Tel: +86 18060617276; Fax: +86 059183465205;  
E-mail: linshf2003@126.com