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Date: Wednesday, January 21st, 2015

Time: 14:30 – 15:30

Venue: B250, Center Bldg., Level B

"Influenza or Ebola– which is the greater threat?"

Abstract:

Over the last 100 years, we have experienced four influenza pandemics: one in 1918, one in 1957, one in 1968, and one in 2009. Of these pandemics, the Spanish flu in 1918 was the most devastating, killing more than 40 million people worldwide. In addition to these pandemics, yearly influenza epidemics occur, causing increased morbidity and mortality, particularly in vulnerable populations like the very young and the elderly. Consequently, influenza has an enormous impact on the global economy; huge losses occur as a result of lost work and increased health care expenditures.

By contrast, Ebola virus has only been recognized since 1976, and, until recently, outbreaks caused by this virus had never caused a sizeable number of deaths. However, the recent outbreak in West Africa took hold over a larger, more densely populated urban area and changed our understanding of an outbreak by this virus. I will discuss our recent findings that could lead to the development of antiviral measures to minimize the impact of these viruses.