

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Hantavirus outbreak on a cruise ship The Geneva University Hospital have identified the strain of the virus**

The [Centre for Emerging Viral Diseases](#) of the Geneva University Hospital (HUG), a WHO collaborating centre, has just identified the strain of hantavirus that caused three deaths on a cruise ship in the Atlantic ocean. The strain is Andes.

This identification was made possible by a sample taken from a person who had been on the MV Hondius and who tested positive for hantavirus by PCR at the Centre national de référence pour les infections virales émergentes (CRIVE, virology laboratory of HUG), on 5 May 2026.

The Andes virus is the only hantavirus for which human-to-human transmission has been documented, explains Dr Manuel Schibler, head of the HUG virology laboratory.

This crucial information was immediately communicated to the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) and the WHO.

#### **For further information**

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#### **HUG: Patient care, teaching and cutting-edge research**

Geneva University Hospital (HUG) is the largest university hospital in Switzerland in terms of volume of activity. Each year, HUG provides medical care for over 255,000 patients. As of 2025, it offers 2,095 hospital beds and employs 13,086 staff. Its missions are patient care, teaching and research. HUG serves as a national reference centre for [influenza](#), [emerging viral infections](#), [meningococcus](#), measles and rubella, paediatric liver diseases and is a [national reference laboratory for histocompatibility](#). In addition, the hospital is a World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre in [six fields](#) and [a centre of expertise](#) in several sectors.

More information on [www.hug.ch](http://www.hug.ch) – Annual report: <https://panorama.hug.ch>