



**The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Department of Applied Mathematics**

**Seminar
On**

**An increase in mortality among children in 1918: An
often overlooked feature of the influenza pandemic**

by

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Abstract

The influenza pandemic of 1918-19 was extremely virulent, and killed many of its victims. In the U.K., and in the U.S. about half a percent of the population died (in less than 12 months); in Sri Lanka the losses were more than double this, at about 1.1% of the population; in India the proportional loss has been estimated at 5.5%. Worldwide, perhaps 40-50 million people died in the pandemic.

Many observers have noted that in 1918-19 influenza killed many in the prime of life but (unusually for influenza) tended to spare the elderly. So far as the very young were concerned, either little or nothing is said, or, occasionally, it is actually reported that they were NOT much affected. It is argued in this presentation that, on the contrary, children under five suffered very badly in the 1918-19 pandemic. Data for females in England and Wales, and in the United States show that the proportion of under fives who died was only slightly lower than among those aged 25-34, who suffered the highest proportional losses. In the case of males in the United States, the proportion of under fives who died was also substantial; in England and Wales it was less, but still by no means negligible. In Sri Lanka, and also in Spain, the proportion of under fives who died was higher than in any other age group.

Date : January 25, 2007 (Thursday)
Time : 4:30 – 5:30 p.m.
Venue : Departmental Conference Room HJ610
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

*** * * ALL ARE WELCOME * * ***