

OVER 50 DEATHS

# Flu season in the Canary Islands

As of March 31, the Directorate General for Health in the Canary Islands had registered 53 deaths due to influenza and 465 hospital admissions of sufferers in a serious condition.

Almost all were infected by 'A' types of the virus, with 60.9 per cent catching the H1N1 strain and 39.1 per cent the H3N2 – both of which are included in vaccines, though only a small percentage of the deceased had undergone vaccination.

Over 73 per cent of the fatalities were in people aged 64 and above, 24.5 per cent in those between 15 and 64 years old, and 1.9 per cent in children under 15, with roughly equal numbers of males and females passing away. Complications of flu that can lead to death include pneumonia, acute shortness of breath, multiple organ failure and septic shock.

In addition to outside admissions, more than a thousand patients were infected with the virus whilst in hospital, though none suffered severe symptoms.

The number of deaths is higher than in the previous year, when only 37 people died of the flu during the same period. However, more than twice as many people were admitted to hospital in this last period. Nevertheless, we are far from suffering an epidemic. The number of illnesses per 100,000 inhabitants has dropped to around 20.78, which is far below the epidemic threshold set this season, of 109.54 cases per 100,000. ■



↑ A vaccination usually helps, but not in every case

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

# So far 15 fatal victims this year



It took months for the police to gather enough evidence to arrest the suspect

A minute's silence was observed recently in front of the Tenerife Island Council building as well as in front of numerous other administrative buildings in the archipelago for a woman who died on January 16 in La Laguna.

A long time passed before some light could be shed on the events surrounding this case. A 47-year-old woman drove into an electricity cable post in the Camino Fuente Cañizares in La Laguna. The car immediately caught fire and burned out, and the driver died inside it. Her 53-year-old companion, her former partner, went to the University Hospital the next morning, hours later, with severe burns. He said he had tried to save his ex partner, but he

had not succeeded. He was treated in a specialist burns unit in Seville because of the severity of his injuries. In the meantime, investigations have shown that the fire did not break out accidentally. The police assume that it was a deliberate homicide which had been disguised as an accident. At the beginning of this month, the former partner was taken into custody for suspected murder. Bail was denied by the judge at the investigating court number four in La Laguna. This brings the number of women killed this year in Spain by their current or former partners to 15. Since the statistics were introduced in 2013, 990 women and 27 children have died as a result of domestic violence and a total of 236 children became orphans. The case of the young woman Romina Celeste from Paraguay, who it is thought to have lost her life at the turn of the year in Lanzarote at the hands of her husband, may still be added to the other 15 women. However, this case has not yet been closed and has therefore not yet been included in the statistics. The Tenerife Island Council led by Carlos Alonso stressed on the occasion of the minute of silence the rejection of any violence, in particular against women and children. At the Equal Opportunities Conference, the Canary Islands Government pointed out that social assistance could also be claimed by women who did not file a complaint. With

this decision, the assessment by the social services department that specifically deals with domestic violence is given more weight and women do not have to file a complaint. It's a hurdle that discourages many. However, anyone who wants police protection and a restriction order must take this step via the police and go to court. In addition, reference was once again made to the various hotlines to which those affected can turn. Women can call 016 around the clock, 365 days a year. They are attended to in 51 different languages. Minors can call the ANAR Foundation on 900 202 010 and members of the public who witness domestic violence should call the emergency number 112 directly. ■

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