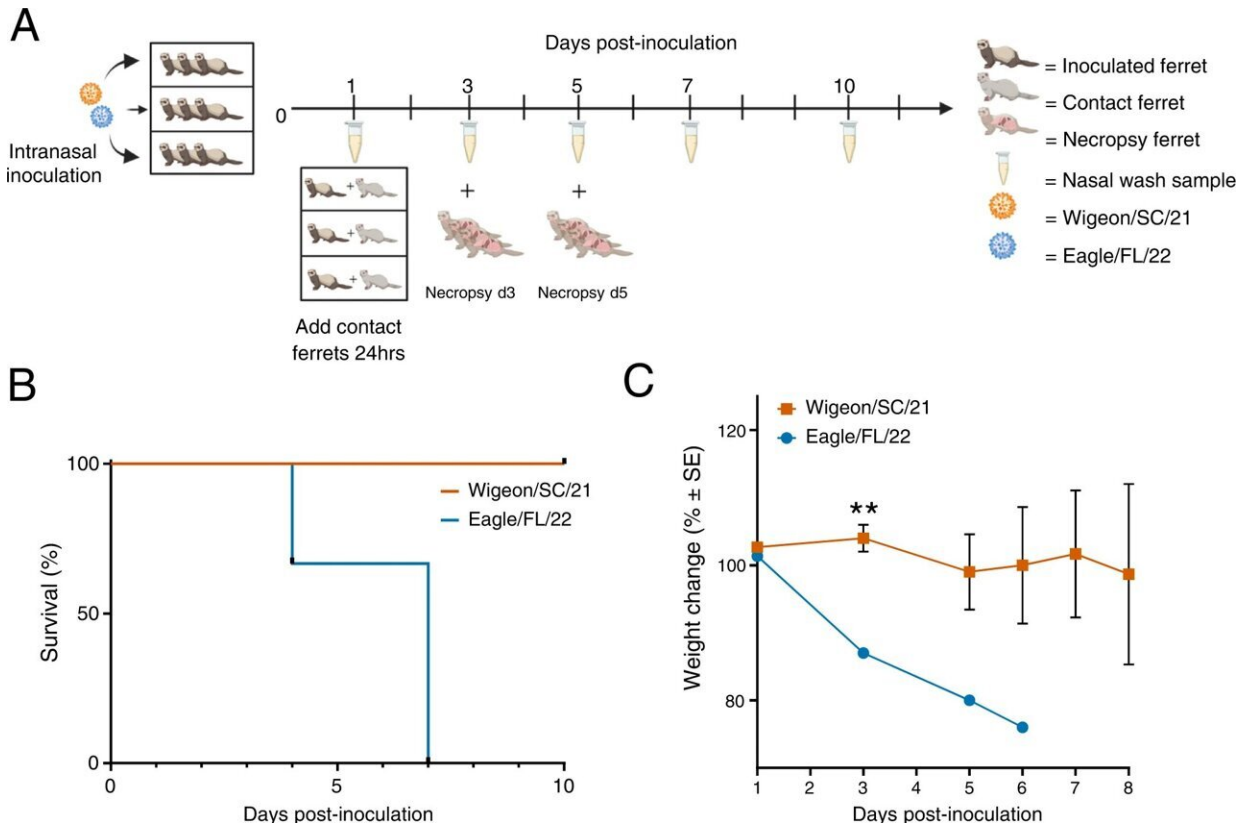
# Genetic change increased bird flu severity during US spread, shows study

May 30 2023




Pathogenicity of North American HPAI Influenza A(H5N1) clade 2.3.4.4b Wigeon/SC/21 and Eagle/FL/22 viruses in ferrets. **A** Experimental design of ferret pathogenesis and transmission. At 0 dpi, ferrets ($n$ = 9 per virus) were inoculated with $10^6$ $EID_{50}$ units of A(H5N1) virus. Three inoculated ferrets were individually co-housed with 3 naïve contact ferrets beginning 1 dpi. Clinical course of infection was monitored, and nasal wash samples were taken at indicated time points from both inoculated and contact ferrets. The remaining inoculated ferrets were euthanized at 3 dpi and 5 dpi ($n$ = 3 per time point per

virus) for viral titration in tissues. **B** Survival and **C** weight changes of inoculated ferrets ($n$ = 3 per virus). Ferret weights every ≈48 h were used to calculate percentage of weight change from the initial mean weight at 0 dpi. Ferret weight values are the average ± SE for each group. $P$ values for weight change were calculated using an unpaired $t$-test. $^{**}P$