

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (45) in DH SEB CD/8/93/1

26 November 2012

Dear Doctor,

**Additional Cases of Severe Respiratory Disease associated
with Novel Coronavirus**

Further to our letter to you dated 27 September, 2012, we would like to alert you that the World Health Organization (WHO) reported four additional cases of novel coronavirus infection on 23 November, 2012. These additional cases included three from Saudi Arabia (of which one was fatal) and one from Qatar. Of the six laboratory confirmed cases reported by WHO so far, four cases (including two deaths) were from Saudi Arabia and two cases were from Qatar.

According to WHO, two of the three most recently confirmed cases in Saudi Arabia were from the same family, living in the same household. Preliminary investigations indicated that these two cases presented with similar symptoms of illness. One died and the other recovered. In addition, two other members of this family also presented with similar symptoms of illness, where one died and the other was recovering. Laboratory results of the fatal case were pending, while the recovering one was tested negative for the novel coronavirus.

Investigations are ongoing in areas of epidemiology, clinical management, and virology, to look into the likely source of infection, the route of exposure, and the possibility of human-to-human transmission of the virus. Close contacts of the recently confirmed cases are being identified and followed-up.

In view of the latest development, WHO alerts Member States to stay prudent and consider testing of patients with unexplained pneumonias for the new coronavirus even in the absence of travel or other associations with the two affected countries. Any clusters of severe acute respiratory illness (SARI) or any health care worker with SARI should be thoroughly investigated regardless of place of occurrence. In this regard, you may consider testing for novel



coronavirus for unexplained pneumonia after exclusion of common causative agents. Laboratory testing of novel coronavirus is available in Public Health Laboratory Centre (PHLC) of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) and please contact the Virology Division of PHLC for necessary arrangement.

We understand WHO is currently reviewing the case definition and other guidance related to the novel coronavirus. In the meantime, **the existing reporting criteria remains unchanged**. To detect suspected cases early, medical practitioners are reminded to notify the Department of Health any suspected cases of severe respiratory disease associated with novel coronavirus fulfilling the reporting criteria (<https://chpceno.chp.gov.hk/casedef/casedef.pdf>) to the Central Notification Office (CENO) of CHP via fax (2477 2770), phone (2477 2772) or CENO On-line (<http://ceno.chp.gov.hk/>). Please also call our Medical Control Officer at 7116 3300 a/c 9179 outside office hour for prompt investigation.

CHP is closely communicating with WHO and relevant overseas health authorities to obtain more information about the recently confirmed cases. CHP will closely monitor the development of the situation and update you with the latest information.

Thank you for your ongoing support in combating communicable diseases.

Yours faithfully,



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