

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (52) in DH SEB CD/8/93/1

20 February, 2013

Dear Doctor,

Update on the Situation of the Severe Respiratory Disease
Associated with Novel Coronavirus

Further to our letter to you dated 14 February, 2013, an additional case of Severe Respiratory Disease associated with Novel Coronavirus (NCoV) was reported in the United Kingdom (UK), which is in the same family cluster of the previously reported two cases this month. As of 19 February, a total of 12 confirmed cases of human infection with NCoV have been reported worldwide, with six deaths since April 2012.

According to the latest information from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and the Health Protection Agency, a male UK resident (10th Case) with confirmed NCoV infection who had travelled to Pakistan and the Middle-East, developed respiratory symptoms on 24 January 2013 and then had arrived unwell in the UK on 28 January 2013. While staying with his family at home, his condition deteriorated and he was admitted to hospital under intensive care. On 6 February 2013, a male household member (11th case) who had contact with the 10th Case from his arrival until hospital admission fell unwell. This patient had an existing medical condition that may have made him more susceptible to a severe respiratory infection. His respiratory condition deteriorated and he was admitted to hospital, where he was in intensive care but subsequently died.



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轄下執行疾病預防
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The Centre for Health
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Department of Health for
disease prevention and
control

The additional confirmed case in UK (12th case) is a younger female family member, who only had exposure to the original index case (i.e. 10th Case) while he was in hospital. She became ill on 5 February 2013 with a typical flu like illness, which did not require hospital admission and from which she has now fully recovered.

Unlike the index case, neither the 11th nor 12th cases have travelled abroad recently. They were likely infected through human-to-human transmission, although the exact route of transmission is still under investigation by the UK authorities. The presence of an intermediary case or fomite spread are possible.

Close follow-up of approximately 200 health care workers, family and other contacts of cases in Europe and the Middle-East have not yet found other demonstrated instances of human-to-human transmission. So far, no sustained transmission or expanding clusters of infection have been identified in any country.

Based on the current situation and available information, World Health Organization (WHO) encourages all Member States to continue their surveillance for severe acute respiratory infections and to carefully review any unusual patterns. Testing for NCoV should be considered in patients with unexplained pneumonias, or in patients with unexplained severe, progressive or complicated respiratory illness not responding to treatment. WHO does not advise special screening at points of entry with regard to this event nor does it recommend that any travel or trade restrictions be applied. In view of the recent family cluster in the UK, WHO has revised the interim case definition for reporting NCoV infection on 19 February 2013. The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) is currently communicating with WHO to clarify the details and will revise the reporting criteria in Hong Kong accordingly.

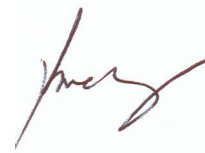
To date, no confirmed cases of NCoV infection were recorded in Hong Kong. Nevertheless, medical practitioners are reminded to notify the Department of Health any suspected cases of severe respiratory disease associated with NCoV, fulfilling the reporting criteria (<https://ceno.chp.gov.hk/casedef/casedef.pdf>) to the Central Notification Office (CENO) of CHP via fax (2477 2770), phone (2477 2772) or CENO On-line. Please also call our Medical Control Officer at 7116 3300 a/c 9179 outside office hour for prompt investigation.

Apart from the statutory notification of severe respiratory disease associated with NCoV as mentioned above, please also consider testing for NCoV for unexplained pneumonia after exclusion of common causative agents, regardless of the travel history. Laboratory testing of NCoV is available in Public Health Laboratory Centre (PHLC) of CHP and please contact the Virology Division of PHLC for necessary arrangement.

Coronaviruses may remain viable in the environment for some time and can be inactivated by 1:99 household bleach. In this connection, the public is advised to maintain personal and environmental hygiene and avoid direct contact with animals, or birds and poultry. Besides, travellers returning from NCoV affected countries with respiratory symptoms should be advised to wear a facial mask and seek medical attention. Their corresponding travel history should be revealed thoroughly.

Thank you for your ongoing support in combating communicable diseases.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'SK CHUANG', with a stylized, flowing script.

(Dr. SK CHUANG)
for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health