

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (10) in DH SEB CD/8/93/1 Pt.2

11 June, 2013

Dear Doctor,

**Statutory Notification and Updated Reporting Criteria of
Middle East Respiratory Syndrome**

You may be aware that the World Health Organization (WHO) has adopted the name “Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus” when referring to the “Novel Coronavirus associated with Severe Respiratory Disease” since 29 May 2013. In this connection, we have initiated the amendment of the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599) to reflect the latest nomenclature adopted by the WHO concerning the disease and the virus.

With effect from 14 June 2013, “Severe Respiratory Disease associated with Novel Coronavirus” will be renamed as “Middle East Respiratory Syndrome” (中東呼吸綜合症) under the list of infectious diseases specified in Schedule 1 to Cap. 599, while “Novel Coronavirus associated with Severe Respiratory Disease” will be renamed as “Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus” (中東呼吸綜合症冠狀病毒) under the list of infectious agents in Schedule 2 to Cap. 599.

According to WHO, a total of 55 laboratory-confirmed cases of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome have been reported globally, including 31 deaths, making a case fatality rate of 56%. So far, no human cases of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome have been detected in Hong Kong. Nevertheless, WHO maintains that the disease represents a significant public health risk and recommends enhanced surveillance and precautions of suspected cases.



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及控制的專業架構
The Centre for Health
Protection is a
professional arm of the
Department of Health for
disease prevention and
control

In addition, a recently published French study reported by WHO estimated that the incubation period of this disease was between nine and twelve days¹. We

¹ Guery B, et al. Clinical features and viral diagnosis of two cases of infection with Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus: a report of nosocomial transmission. *Lancet*. Published online 29 May 2013.

understand the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the United States has used 14 days as the longest incubation period. In view of the latest scientific evidence and international practice, we have revised the longest incubation period in the reporting criteria **from 10 days to 14 days**.

Medical practitioners are reminded to notify the Department of Health any suspected cases who reside in or have history of travel to the Arabian Peninsula or neighboring countries **within 14 days before onset of illness** 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. Please kindly note that the updated reporting criteria are available on CENO On-line website (<http://ceno.chp.gov.hk/>).

Thank you for your ongoing support in combating communicable diseases.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read 'SK CHUANG', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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