



衛生防護中心
Centre for Health Protection

Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases

Consensus Summary on Severe Respiratory Disease associated with Novel Coronavirus

The discovery of a novel coronavirus (human betacoronavirus 2c) associated with severe respiratory syndrome is a significant event. Presently, the virus is known to have caused a serious infection with respiratory and renal failure in two patients from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and Qatar with apparently no epidemiological link to one another (the Qatar patient had stayed in KSA before illness onset).

2. The novel coronavirus is genetically distinct from the SARS-coronavirus in 2003. Genetically, it is close to certain bat coronaviruses identified previously by the Hong Kong University. However, the source and reservoir of the novel coronavirus requires further investigations.

3. Further investigations are needed to fully understand the novel coronavirus and its public health implications. While there is so far no evidence of person-to-person transmission, much uncertainty remains in its epidemiology including reservoir, mode and efficiency of transmission, clinical spectrum of illness, etc. Intensified international surveillance and laboratory testing are expected to generate more important findings to characterize the behavior of the novel coronavirus.

4. Hospitals should take appropriate infection control precautions when admitting patients suspected to have novel coronavirus infection. Interim infection control guidelines have been published by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP)



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Protection is a

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disease prevention and

control

5. Surveillance for this infection is crucial. Medical practitioners should report to the CHP according to the promulgated case definitions and reporting criteria which are in line with those stipulated by the World Health Organization. Hong Kong has several advanced laboratory facilities capable of testing this virus. Virus samples will be shared among the testing laboratories.

6. The Scientific Committee (SC) recommends travelers who fall sick within 10 days after visiting affected countries to put on a mask, seek medical attention immediately, and inform the doctor of recent travel history.

7. The SC will re-assess the situation as more information about novel coronavirus infection comes to light.

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