

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (47) in DH SEB CD/8/93/1

3 December 2012

Dear Doctor,

**Update on Global Situation of Severe Respiratory Disease associated
with Novel Coronavirus**

Further to our letter to you dated 26 November, 2012, we would like to update you with the latest development on severe respiratory disease associated with novel coronavirus. As of 30 November, the World Health Organization (WHO) has reported nine confirmed cases of human infection with novel coronavirus from Qatar (two cases), Saudi Arabia (five cases) and Jordan (two cases). All patients were severely ill and five of them died.

According to WHO, the two Qatari patients are not linked. Both had severe pneumonia and acute renal failure. Both are now recovering. A total of five confirmed cases have been reported from Saudi Arabia. The first two are not linked to each other; one of them died. Three other confirmed cases are epidemiologically linked and occurred in one family living within the same household; two of them died. One additional family member in this household also developed symptoms similar to those of the confirmed cases. This person has recovered and was tested negative for the virus.

In addition, two confirmed cases have been reported in Jordan. Both of them died. These cases were discovered through testing of stored samples from a cluster of pneumonia cases that occurred in April 2012.

The two clusters from Saudi Arabia and Jordan raise the possibility of limited human-to-human transmission or, alternatively, exposure to a common source. Ongoing investigation is underway to distinguish between these possibilities.

According to WHO, the current understanding of this novel virus is that it can cause a severe, acute respiratory infection presenting as pneumonia.

Acute renal failure has also occurred in five cases.

In view of the latest development, please consider testing for novel coronavirus for unexplained pneumonia after exclusion of common causative agents, regardless of the travel history. 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 that WHO is currently reviewing the case definition and other guidance related to the novel coronavirus. While **the existing reporting criteria remains unchanged**, please kindly be informed that we have **included Jordan as one of the affected areas** (http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/novel_coronavirus_affected_areas.pdf). 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 and will update you with the latest information.

Thank you for your ongoing support in combating communicable diseases.

Yours faithfully,



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