

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (11) in DH CDB/8/95/1

20 October 2023

Dear Doctor,

**Vigilance against *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* infection**

We would like to alert you that the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) has noted media reports about increasing activity of *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* infection in Mainland China, and a rise in hospital admission associated with *M. pneumoniae* infection recently in Hong Kong.

In the past, cyclical high activity of *M. pneumoniae* has been recorded every few years in Hong Kong, with the last periods of high activity occurring in 2016 and 2019. The monthly number of hospital paediatric admissions in public hospitals with principal diagnosis of *M. pneumoniae* infection rose from 0-16 cases (during January to July) to 57, 106 and 63 respectively in August, September and during 1-17 October 2023. The monthly total of 106 paediatric admissions in September 2023 was comparable with the peak months in 2017 (around 110 cases), but lower than the peak months in 2016 and 2019 (180-289 during May to August 2016 and 184-255 during May to August 2019).

Infections caused by *M. pneumoniae* usually manifest as a respiratory illness, including pneumonia. *M. pneumoniae* mainly spreads from person to person through respiratory droplets. Children and young adults are mostly affected and outbreaks can occur in crowded institutional settings. With an incubation period commonly 3 weeks, the majority of patients present with mild upper respiratory tract symptoms whereas a minority may develop atypical pneumonia. *M. pneumoniae* is recognised as one of the most common causes of community-acquired pneumonia in otherwise healthy patients younger than 40 years.

For pneumonia or severe infection, patients will be treated with antibiotics. As macrolides may be used to treat *M. pneumoniae* infection in children in normal circumstances, clinicians should note that up to 70% of the *M. pneumoniae* detections from respiratory specimens tested by CHP's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch in 2019 were found to be resistant to macrolide.



You are cordially encouraged to provide patient education on judicious use of antibiotics during clinical encounters, in order to preserve our valuable antibiotics together. You may refer to the IMPACT guideline for treatment options via <https://impact.chp.gov.hk>, and guidance notes for management of

community acquired pneumonia in primary care via [https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/guidance\\_notes\\_community\\_acquired\\_pneumonia\\_full.pdf](https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/guidance_notes_community_acquired_pneumonia_full.pdf).

There is no vaccine against *M. pneumoniae*. As with any respiratory disease, good personal and environmental hygiene can effectively prevent transmission of *M. pneumoniae*. As we are still in the influenza season, we would like to solicit your assistance to remind members of the public to take the following measures to prevent respiratory infections:

- For high-risk persons (e.g. persons with underlying medical conditions or the immunocompromised), wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places.
- To maintain good personal hygiene, such as:
  - Perform hand hygiene frequently;
  - Cover nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing; and
  - Always wrap nasal and mouth discharges with tissue paper, and dispose of the tissue paper properly in a lidded rubbish bin.
- To maintain good ventilation of indoor areas and avoid visiting crowded places with poor ventilation.
- To build up good body immunity by having a balanced diet, regular exercise, adequate rest, reducing stress, do not smoke and avoid alcohol consumption.
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.
- Eligible patients to get vaccinated against COVID-19 and seasonal influenza as soon as possible, in anticipation possible surge of both diseases in winter.

You are also reminded to report outbreaks of respiratory illnesses occurring in institutional settings to our Central Notification Office (Tel: 2477 2772; Fax: 2477 2770; CENO On-line at [https://cdis.chp.gov.hk/CDIS\\_CENO\\_ONLINE/ceno.html](https://cdis.chp.gov.hk/CDIS_CENO_ONLINE/ceno.html)) for prompt epidemiological investigations and appropriate control measures.

Yours faithfully,



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