

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (1) in DH CDB/8/104/1
來函檔號 Your Ref. :
電話 Tel. :
傳真 Fax No. :

5 April 2024

Dear Doctor,

Vigilance against B virus infection and addition of the infection to the list of “Other communicable diseases of topical public health concern”

I would like to draw your attention to the recently confirmed case of human infection of B virus (also known as herpes simiae virus), and new arrangement on reporting of this disease by adding it to the list of “Other communicable diseases of topical public health concern” with immediate effect.

The case involves a 37-year-old male with good past health, who was admitted to Yan Chai Hospital through accident and emergency department on March 21 due to fever and decreased conscious level. He is now receiving treatment at the Intensive Care Unit of the hospital and his condition is critical. Cerebrospinal fluid specimen of the patient tested positive with detection of nucleic acid for B virus by PCR by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP). According to the information provided by his family members, the patient had contacts with wild monkeys and was wounded by them during his visit to Kam Shan Country Park in late February. Epidemiological investigations are ongoing.

B virus (also known as herpes simiae virus) is a type of herpes virus that is usually found among macaques. B virus can be found in the saliva, urine and stool of infected macaques. Human infections are mainly caused by bites or scratches by infected macaques. Infected persons may initially present with flu-like symptoms, such as fever and chills, muscle ache, fatigue and headache. Vesicular skin lesions may then occur at the bite or scratch site. As disease progresses, the virus can spread to the central nervous system (CNS) resulting in pain/numbness/itchiness near the wound, problems with muscle coordination, damage to the nervous system and even death. Other symptoms suggestive of CNS involvement include hyperesthesia, ataxia, diplopia, agitation and ascending flaccid paralysis. Laboratory diagnosis would involve detection of



nucleic acid of the virus in a clinical specimen and early antiviral treatment may improve survival.

To enhance surveillance of human infection of B virus, we would like to seek your cooperation to **report suspected cases of B virus infection in accordance with the reporting criteria at Annex 1** to us for further epidemiological investigation and management. Should you identify patients fulfilling the reporting criteria, please report the case to CHP via fax (2477 2770), phone (2477 2772), or CENO On-line (https://cdis.chp.gov.hk/CDIS_CENO_ONLINE/ceno.html) during office hour, or call our Medical Control Officer (pager: 7116 3300 call 9179) outside office hours.

The enhanced surveillance mechanism for B virus infection is similar reporting of other communicable diseases of topical public health concern and suspected institutional outbreaks. A list of related diseases and conditions accessible via https://cdis.chp.gov.hk/CDIS_CENO_ONLINE/disease.html is also enclosed at **Annex 2** for your reference.

Thank you for your continuous support in combating infectious diseases.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'SK CHUANG', written in a cursive style.

(Dr. SK CHUANG)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health

B virus infection

Description

B virus (also known as herpes simiae virus) is a type of herpes virus that is usually found among macaques. B virus can be found in the saliva, urine and stool of infected macaques. Human infections are mainly caused by bites or scratches by infected macaques.

Symptoms usually occur within 1 month of the patient being exposed. Infected persons may initially present with flu-like symptoms, such as fever and chills, muscle ache, fatigue and headache. Vesicular skin lesions may then occur at the bite or scratch site. As disease progresses, the virus can spread to the central nervous system (CNS) resulting in pain/numbness/itchiness near the wound, problems with muscle coordination, damage to the nervous system and even death. Other symptoms suggestive of CNS involvement include hyperesthesia, ataxia, diplopia, agitation and ascending flaccid paralysis.

Reporting criteria

An individual with history of monkey scratch/bite with wound within 1 month of illness onset **AND** features suggestive of CNS infection

OR

An individual with detection of nucleic acid of B virus in a clinical specimen.

Confirmed case

A clinically compatible illness that is laboratory confirmed.

Other communicable diseases of topical public health concern

Though not specified in the First Schedule to the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance, medical practitioners are urged to report suspected or confirmed cases of the following diseases to CENO for arrangement of investigation and control as appropriate:

- Acute flaccid paralysis
- Brucellosis
- B virus infection
- Cryptosporidiosis
- Myiasis (flesh fly)
- Severe paediatric enterovirus infection (other than EV71 and poliovirus)
- Severe paediatric influenza-associated complication/death
- *Vibrio vulnificus* infection (with necrotising fasciitis)

Suspected institutional outbreaks

Any suspected institutional outbreaks of communicable diseases can be reported to CENO for arrangement of investigation and control as appropriate. Examples include:

- Acute conjunctivitis outbreak
- Acute gastroenteritis outbreak
- Candida auris outbreak
- COVID-19 outbreak
- Hand, foot and mouth disease outbreak
- Head lice outbreak
- Influenza-like illness outbreak
- Scabies outbreak
- Upper respiratory tract infection outbreak