傳 染 病 處

衞生防護中心
Centre for Health Protection
保障市民健康
Protecting Hong Kong's health

Communicable Disease Branch

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (4) in DH CDB/8/43/1 Pt.4
來函檔號 Your Ref :
電 話 Tel. :
傳 真 Fax No. :

12 October 2026

Dear Medical Superintendent,

Enhanced Surveillance for Pneumonia of Unknown Etiology among Persons with Travel History to Irkutsk Oblast of Russia

We would like to draw your attention to a fatal case of pneumonia with unknown etiology in Irkutsk Oblast (伊爾庫茨克州) located in Siberia of Russia announced by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 10 October 2026[1]. Please remain vigilant against pneumonia of unknown etiology among patients with travel history to Irkutsk Oblast of Russia.

According to information gathered by the WHO from the Russian health authorities, the case involved a 28-year-old female laboratory worker at the Irkutsk Anti-Plague Research Institute of Siberia and the Far East in Irkutsk Oblast, Russia. She initially presented with symptoms compatible with an acute respiratory viral infection. She was hospitalised for severe pneumonia on 29 September and died on 2 October. The patient and all identified contacts were tested for a broad range of pathogens, including influenza, SARS-CoV-2, other respiratory infections and bacterial infections (including plague and Streptococcus). The patient was determined to have died from pneumonia of unknown etiology. She had not travelled outside Irkutsk Oblast during the two weeks before symptom onset.

The Russian authorities reported that sanitary and epidemic control measures had been put in place, including identification of contacts, who were placed under medical observation. All contacts were reported to be asymptomatic, with negative laboratory results for high-threat pathogens. The authorities also reported that no laboratory biosafety or biosecurity incidents had occurred at the institute.

[1] https://www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news/item/2026-DON620

衞生防護中心乃衞生署轄下執行疾病預防及控制的專業架構
The Centre for Health Protection is a professional arm of the Department of Health for disease prevention and control

香港九龍亞皆老街 147C 號 3 樓
3/F, 147C Argyle Street, Kowloon, Hong Kong

The WHO has not identified evidence of ongoing transmission associated with this event. However, confidence in the assessment remains limited by the absence of a confirmed etiological diagnosis and the remaining uncertainty regarding the source and mode of exposure.

As a precautionary measure, the CHP will strengthen health screening among travellers from Russia at the Hong Kong airport. Also, the CHP will enhance surveillance of pneumonia of unknown etiology among persons with travel history to Irkutsk Oblast. For all patients presenting with pneumonia, please obtain a travel history and arrange testing for common respiratory pathogens to confirm the causative pathogen. Please report promptly to the CHP any patient fulfilling **both** of the following criteria:

1. Patients with radiological evidence of pneumonia and without any pathogen identified after preliminary testing; **AND**
2. Travel history to Irkutsk Oblast of Russia within two weeks before onset of symptoms.

For out-patients presenting with symptoms and signs of pneumonia and a travel history to Irkutsk Oblast of Russia, the attending doctors are advised to arrange rapid antigen tests (RATs) for respiratory pathogens (e.g. seasonal influenza, SARS-CoV-2 and other common viruses) for them where possible. If a patient tests negative, or if testing is not available, the patient should be referred to an Accident and Emergency Department for further investigation. Patients with radiological evidence of pneumonia and negative test results for common respiratory pathogens should be reported promptly to the Central Notification Office (CENO) of the CHP by fax (2477 2770) or email (diseases@dh.gov.hk) using the attached notification form, and should be admitted to an isolation ward. The CHP will arrange further laboratory testing for these patients.

Please draw the attention of healthcare professionals and supporting staff in your institution/ working with you to the above. Thank you for your unfailing support in the prevention and control of communicable diseases.

Yours faithfully,

(Dr. Albert AU)
for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health

Restricted

NOTIFICATION FORM

Reporting of Pneumonia of Unknown Etiology with Travel History to Irkutsk Oblast, Russia

(Fax: 2477 2770 or Email: diseases@dh.gov.hk)

1. Travel history

Specify place/region in Irkutsk Oblast of Russia visited: _____

Duration of stay: _____ / _____ (dd/mm) to _____ / _____) (dd/mm)

2. Personal particulars

Name in English: _____ **Name in Chinese:** _____

Age / Sex: _____ / _____ **Identity card/Passport number:** _____

Residential address: _____

Telephone number (Home): _____ **(Mobile):** _____

Hospital admitted: _____ **Hospital / A&E Number:** _____

3. Clinical information

Presenting Symptoms: ☐ Fever ☐ Cough ☐ Shortness of Breath ☐ Myalgia
☐ Others: _____

Chest X-ray (CXR) finding: _____

Clinical condition: ☐ Stable ☐ Serious ☐ Critical
☐ ICU admission ☐ Intubated / Ventilated

4. Laboratory tests performed with negative result

☐ Influenza A / B ☐ SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) ☐ Respiratory Syncytial Virus

☐ Parainfluenza virus ☐ Adenovirus ☐ Rhinovirus / enterovirus

☐ *Legionella pneumophila* ☐ *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* ☐ *Streptococcus pneumoniae*

Specify other negative test results & dates: _____

5. Reporting doctor

Dr. _____ of _____

(Full Name in BLOCK Letters) Hospital/Clinic

Ward/Unit: _____ Date of Report: _____ / _____ (dd/mm)

Telephone number: _____ (Signature)_____