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Subject: PRO/AH/EDR> Undiagnosed pneumonia - China (HU) (09): novel coronavirus, more info, fatality

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UNDIAGNOSED PNEUMONIA - CHINA (HUBEI) (09): NOVEL CORONAVIRUS, MORE INFORMATION, FIRST FATALITY

A ProMED-mail post

<http://www.promedmail.org>

ProMED-mail is a program of the
International Society for Infectious Diseases
<http://www.isid.org>

[1]

Date: Sat 11 Jan 2020, 8:09 AM

Source: CGTN [edited]

<https://news.cgtn.com/news/2020-01-11/Wuhan-reports-one-death-in-latest-pneumonia-outbreak-N9NQewntjG/index.html>

The local health commission reported 1 death on [Sat 11 Jan 2020] amid the recent pneumonia outbreak in central China's Wuhan City.

Among the 41 cases that have been confirmed so far, 2 persons have been discharged from hospital, 7 are in critical condition, and 1 is reported dead.

The virus that caused the outbreak was identified as a new type of coronavirus; SARS, MERS, and bird flu have all been ruled out. No new case has been detected since [Fri 3 Jan 2020].

The commission said that up to now [Sat 11 Jan 2020], there is no evidence of human-to-human transmission, and no medical personnel were found infected.

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Communicated by:

ProMED-mail Rapporteur Kunihiko Iizuka

[ProMED-mail Rapporteur Kunihiko Iizuka submitted a short Reuters report on this fatality (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-health-pneumonia/one-dead-in-china-outbreak-of-previously-unknown-virus-idUSKBN1ZA00D>), leading me to search for more information.

In the past 30 minutes there have been several reports of this death on Weibo, a Chinese social media platform. The above report as well as the Weibo reports mention there remain 7 critical patients out of 41 confirmed cases, (presumably eliminating the 19 cases reported to have been negative for the virus (see section [2] below), but adding one more case to the original stated 59 suspected cases in this cluster. It appears as though this fatality is not among the original reported 7 critical cases.

We await more information as it becomes available. - Mod.MPP]

[2]

Date: Fri 10 Jan 2020, 12:30 PM

Source: Science [edited]

<https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/01/mystery-virus-found-wuhan-resembles-bat-viruses-not-sars-chinese-scientist-says>

A new coronavirus identified by Chinese scientists is the putative cause of an outbreak of unusual pneumonia in the central city of Wuhan, according to Chinese news reports yesterday [Thu 9 Jan 2020]. In an interview today [Fri 10 Jan 2020] with Science, Xu Jianguo, head of an evaluation committee advising the Chinese government, confirmed that scientists have a complete sequence of the novel virus's genome.

The World Health Organization on [9 Jan 2020] requested sequence data, a spokesperson in Geneva says, and many scientists urge the country to make the sequence public quickly, but the decision is up to the top leadership of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, says Xu, who is director of the Beijing-based State Key Laboratory for Infectious Disease Prevention and Control, part of China CDC. (The center's head, George Gao, did not respond to emails from Science seeking comment.)

Xu says the investigation is being led by China CDC but numerous groups in other government agencies are involved. "Plenty of people are working on the outbreak," he says. The role of the evaluation committee Xu leads is to review all the findings and make recommendations to the National Health Commission. Xu also said the novel coronavirus resembles known bat viruses, but not the coronaviruses that cause severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS).

The following transcript has been edited for clarity and brevity.

[Q=question, A=answer]

Q: The virus has been isolated from one patient, is that correct?

A: Correct. Two groups isolated the virus from samples from one patient. The viruses are nearly identical in morphology under electron microscopy. Researchers did laboratory investigations of 34 patients. A total of 15 were positive for the novel virus, [based on] sequencing samples of [fluid injected into the lung and collected for examination]. The teams got complete genome sequence data from about 10 patients. They are now attempting to isolate the virus from those samples as well. There are 19 cases with no evidence of the virus. There is no information available for the results of the remaining 25 cases.

Q: How close is this new virus to the SARS coronavirus?

A: The virus is similar to some of the published viruses collected from bats. But it is not close to SARS and not close to MERS.

Q: Are close contacts of patients and market workers being tested for antibodies to the new virus?

A: [Investigators] have just gotten the virus, they now need the chance to prepare reagents for antibody tests, but there are no data yet.

Q: The [Sun 5 Jan 2020] report from the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission, the latest available, says a total of 59 pneumonia patients have been identified as possibly carrying the virus. Have more patients been found?

A: It should be mentioned that the 59 reported pneumonia patients in Wuhan were clinically diagnosed; of those, 15 were confirmed to be infected by the new coronavirus. No new patients have appeared, as far as I understand. It's good news. People fear something like SARS in 2003, but this is a different case. The outbreak is limited, but we should test patients one by one [to identify] pneumonia caused by other pathogens.

Q: Are researchers trying to replicate the disease in lab animals to prove that it is really the cause of the outbreak?

A: People have recommended that [investigators] do tests to see if the virus can cause the infection in animals, but they need time.

Q: Is there any progress in tracing the original source of the virus?

A: I have no information. Personally, I'm interested, too. The virus looks like viruses isolated from bats, but how it was transmitted from bats to people is still a question. Several groups in China have been working on bat coronaviruses for years. I imagine they're working on this but so far there is no information.

Q: Are other live animal markets being checked?

A: The Wuhan market has been closed. I have no information about other [markets]. Wild animals carry the risk of exposing people to new viruses. I think we should have more strict regulations and inspections of markets that sell wild animals, especially since the source of the new coronavirus has not been identified and eliminated.

[Byline: Dennis Normile, with reporting by Jon Cohen]

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Communicated by:

ProMED-mail

<promed@promedmail.org>

[A very interesting and helpful interview. In summary, 15 out of 34 individuals tested for this coronavirus had virus identified in specimens taken from them. A total of 19 of the 34 had no evidence of the virus on testing. No serology has been performed as yet as the serology testing hasn't been established as yet. It is curious that the virus is described as not being close to either the SARS-CoV or the MERS-CoV. Information from a reliable source had mentioned the virus had 20% diversion from the SARS-CoV. It will be interesting to see where the viruses are situated on a phylogenetic tree. By memory, when the SARS-CoV was 1st identified, the descriptions of the virus included a statement it was related to a bat coronavirus. And when the MERS-CoV was identified, a similar statement was made. Suggests concluding that when novel coronaviruses make a species jump, they possibly/probably started out as a bat coronavirus. So a question arises as to was this a direct bat to human jump, or is there an intermediate host facilitating this species jump?

We continue to see reports on suspected cases (presumably defined as a patient with a febrile respiratory illness with a history of travel from Wuhan City in the 14 days prior to onset). The majority of patients have had other known respiratory viruses isolated from specimens, and thus far, none of these suspected cases have given a history of visiting the Seafood market while in Wuhan City. That being said, in the absence of laboratory testing for this novel coronavirus, it is only speculation that they weren't infected with the Wuhan novel coronavirus.

A map showing locations of major cities in China can be found at <https://www.chinadiscovery.com/china->

maps/city-maps.html.

HealthMap/ProMED-mail map of Hubei China: <http://healthmap.org/promed/p/5294>.

- Mod.MPP]

[3]

Date: Fri 10 Jan 2020

Source: CIDRAP (Center for Infectious Disease Research & Policy) News [edited]

<http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/01/pressure-builds-china-share-info-new-coronavirus>

Pressure builds on China to share info on new coronavirus

On Twitter and other forums, pressure is growing on China to share genetic sequences and other details about the new coronavirus implicated this week in an unexplained pneumonia outbreak in Wuhan.

So far, the only official announcements on cases came from Wuhan's health commission, which hasn't released any updates since [Sun 5 Jan 2020]. The announcements of preliminary identification of a new coronavirus have come mainly from tightly controlled Chinese media reports quoting Chinese scientists close to the investigation.

On [Thu 9 Jan 2020], the World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed the basic facts based on information from China and said over the coming weeks, more comprehensive information is needed to understand the dynamics of the outbreak and the patients' clinical symptoms.

Concerned global health officials

A handful of countries in Asia have identified sick travelers coming from Wuhan, though none have been linked to the city's pneumonia cluster, which authorities have traced to a now-shuttered seafood market that also sold live animals and meat from wildlife.

Though Chinese authorities have said human-to-human transmission isn't a feature of the new disease, global health officials are nervous, given Wuhan's population of 11 million people and the outbreak coming just ahead a heavy travel season connected to the upcoming Lunar New Year holiday [Sat 25 Jan 2020].

Also, the outbreak is occurring against the backdrop of the winter uptick in respiratory virus illnesses such as colds and flu, and health officials are eager to know how to test for the new virus.

Rumors are swirling in the scientific community that Chinese researchers are preparing medical journal articles for submission. Jeremy Farrar, MD, PhD, director of Wellcome Trust, said on Twitter today [Fri 10 Jan 2020] that if the rumors are true and critical health information isn't being shared immediately with the WHO, "something is very wrong." Another Twitter user pointed out that the virus has reportedly been fully sequenced and the team from China should have already shared it on GenBank.

Others commenting in the thread, however, pointed out the problem isn't unique to China, with similar calls for more timely data sharing made in the early days of other emerging outbreaks, such Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) and Ebola virus in West Africa.

More details on clinical symptoms

Meanwhile, a few new details about the patients' illnesses came today from Hu Ke, a member of the treatment team who was quoted in CN Healthcare, an online healthcare media portal. FluTrackers, an infectious disease news message board, translated and posted the report.

Hu said most patients have mild-to-moderate disease, some have been discharged, and most are in stable condition. The main symptoms are fever, fatigue, and a dry cough. Some experience breathing problems as the disease worsens.

Lab tests in early illness showed normal or decreasing white blood cell counts, decreased lymphocytes, with elevated liver and muscle enzymes in some patients.

Chest x-rays showed that all patients had pneumonia with multiple ground glassy exudates seen in the lungs.

European groups issue risk assessment, guidance

Elsewhere, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) yesterday [Thu 9 Jan 2020] posted its 1st risk assessment on the Wuhan novel coronavirus outbreak, based on limited information.

It notes that 3 European Union airports have direct flights to Wuhan, with indirect flights at other hubs.

"Considering there is no indication of human-to-human transmission and no cases detected outside of China, the likelihood of introduction to the EU is considered to be low, but cannot be excluded," it said, adding that more epidemiological and lab information is needed to do a comprehensive risk assessment.

Public Health England (PHE) today also weighed in today [Fri 10 Jan 2020], saying the risk to the United Kingdom population is very low and the threat to travelers to Wuhan is low. It urged people to take simple precautions such as observing good hand and personal hygiene.

The PHE also posted guidance on the initial investigation of possible Wuhan-related cases and infection prevention for the new coronavirus.

[Byline: Lisa Schnirring]

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Communicated by:

Mary Marshall

<mjm2020@googlemail.com>

[Many of the questions related to human to human transmission will require testing for the virus and potentially for serology indicating possible recent past infection with the virus. In addition, more investigations as to the source of the virus could be conducted. - Mod.MPP]

See Also

Undiagnosed pneumonia - China (HU) (08): novel coronavirus, WHO 20200110.6881082

Undiagnosed pneumonia - China (HU) (07): official confirmation of novel coronavirus 20200108.6878869

Undiagnosed pneumonia - China (HU) (06): Hong Kong surveillance, USA CDC alert 20200108.6876648

Undiagnosed pneumonia - China (HU) (05): (HU) novel coronavirus identified 20200108.6877694

Undiagnosed pneumonia - China (HU) (04): Hong Kong surveillance 20200106.6874277

Undiagnosed pneumonia - China (HU) (03): updates, SARS, MERS ruled out, WHO, RFI 20200105.6872267

Undiagnosed pneumonia - China (HU) (02): updates, other country responses, RFI 20200103.6869668

Undiagnosed pneumonia - China (HU) (01): wildlife sales, market closed, RFI 20200102.6866757

2019

Undiagnosed pneumonia - China (HU): RFI 20191230.6864153

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