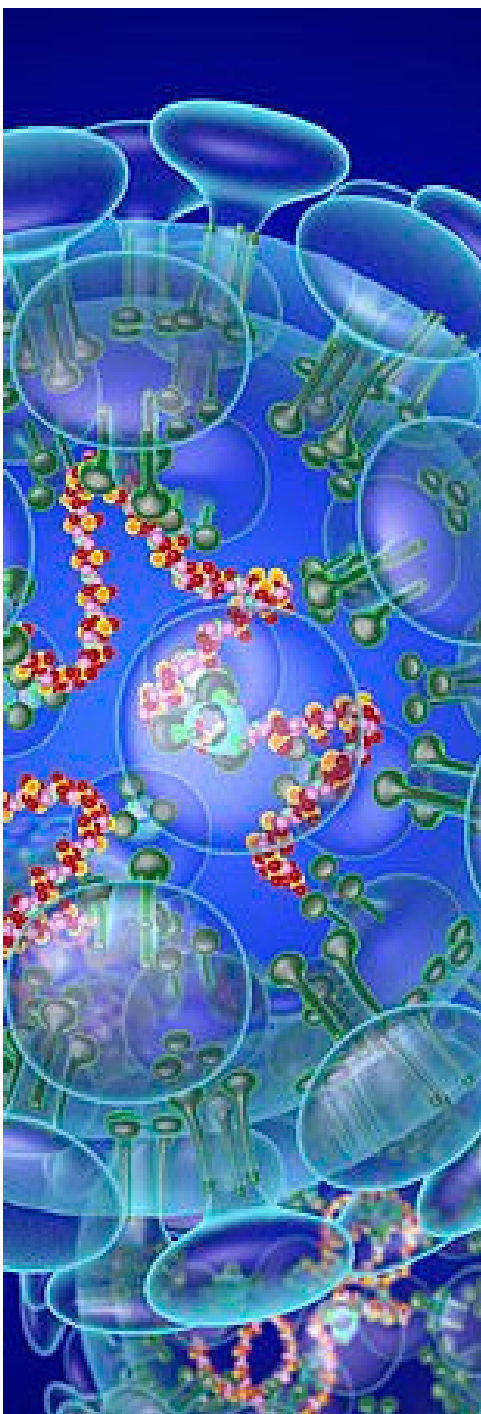


CORONAVIRUS BULLETIN

Significant disease outbreak notification

JANUARY 25TH, 2020



General Update

Is this a Global Health Emergency?

The WHO Emergency Committee did not declare this outbreak a PHEIC (Public Health Emergency of International Concern) – making it clear that it is a major emergency in China but not yet triggering the criteria for a global health emergency; the committee is on standby to reconvene when required.

How many people have become infected?

In this rapidly evolving situation almost all statistics are out of date as soon as they are published, but as of this afternoon China was reporting 916 cases with 26 deaths (fatality rate of around 3%). Of note, one of those deaths was the first outside Wuhan. Cases also reported in Thailand (5), Singapore (3), Taiwan (3), Hong Kong (2), Japan (2), Macau (2), South Korea (2), Vietnam (2) and the United States (2).

Is there sustained human to human spread?

China has confirmed human to human spread and clearly the virus is behaving as if this was the primary method of transmission in these cases. Sustained human to human spread has not been confirmed outside China although it seems likely. It remains difficult to assess how easily the virus can be spread and this remains a high priority for the World Health Organization and CDC.

[View the full report by the World Health Authority](#)

Response

How has China responded to the outbreak?

A total of 15 of China's provincial-level jurisdictions, including Beijing and Shanghai, enacted "Level I" emergency responses, the country's highest level of public health emergency response to the virus.

The list of cities under full or partial lock down has grown to 13: Wuhan, Ezhou, Xiantao, Zhijiang, Qianjiang, Huanggang, Chibi, Jingmen, Xianning, Huangshi, Dangyang, Enshi, and Xiaogan. Travel restrictions both to and from many of these cities are in place.

What international precautions are in place?

Neither the WHO or CDC have recommended any restriction on travel or trade at this stage.

Many countries have implemented a border health screening to try and identify travelers with a fever who might be carrying the virus.

Given that the incubation period may be as long as 14 days, many travelers carrying the virus will not have a temperature and thus not be picked up. However, a border screening is an opportunity to remind them that they must report their symptoms to a local health provider if they subsequently get sick.

What steps are IMG taking to protect their members?

IMG has extensive experience working with governments and medical organizations to assist our members during serious medical situations, including all global health emergencies since 1990.

In addition, our robust network of air ambulance providers have experience transferring patients with infectious disease and we are engaged in a continual dialogue with them to understand their worldwide readiness.

Key Facts

It has not been established how easily the virus can be transmitted between people.

The incubation period (that time between infection and displaying symptoms) is between 2 and 14 days (source CDC).

Various agencies around the world are starting to work on a vaccine active against this virus but it may take many months to become available.

The fatality rate is currently thought to be around 3% although it is likely that there are many undiagnosed cases in China. This means that the overall fatality rate will be much lower.

Many of those who have died from this infection are thought to have had pre existing disease that made them more vulnerable.

Advice to those in affected areas

What steps can be taken to try and avoid infection?

There are a variety of simple steps that can help reduce the risk of becoming infected, even in an area where there is an extensive outbreak.

1) Avoid large crowds and public gatherings

Being in close proximity to a large number of people, even if they (or you) are wearing a mask, increases the probability that you will contract the virus. China has cancelled large public gatherings in affected areas.

2) Wearing a mask

There is a great deal of debate about the effectiveness of wearing a mask, but in areas where there are many people infected, mask wearing may reduce the risk. This is probably because a mask reduces the amount of hand to mouth contact.

3) Regular hand washing

One of the most effective ways of reducing spread is through regular and thorough hand washing and avoidance of hand to mouth contact. Use of alcohol gel throughout the day can also significantly reduce the risk.

4) Catch your coughs and sneezes

Corona-viruses tend to be spread through coughing and sneezing. 'Catching' your cough or sneeze in the crook of your elbow or a tissue can help prevent the virus infecting others or getting onto surfaces around an office or home.

5) Social distancing

Substituting face to face meetings with teleconferencing, avoiding shaking hands and distancing from those with flu like symptoms can all help reduce transmission. Staff working in contact centres in endemic areas should avoid sharing headsets or visiting each others work areas.

Key Facts

Simple measures are the most effective in controlling spread.

Hand washing has to be thorough to be effective - you can find the WHO guide [here](#).

Masks have traditionally been worn in China during outbreaks. We do not really know precisely how these viruses are transmitted or the effectiveness of masks.

If worn, masks must be changed if they become wet. In healthcare settings the patient may also be asked to wear a mask.

Governments (sometimes in collaboration with the WHO) ultimately set the policy on the movement of infected patients, even if they are being carried by air ambulance.