

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (169) in DH CDB/9/17/5 Pt.1

January 6, 2020

Dear Principal / Person-in-charge,

Further updates on the cluster of pneumonia cases in Wuhan

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health writes to further update you on the latest information of the cluster of pneumonia cases in Wuhan of Hubei Province (湖北省武漢市).

According to the latest information available from the National Health Commission (NHC), there were a total of 59 pneumonia cases with unknown cause detected in Wuhan since December 2019 (as of January 5, 2020). No fatal cases have been recorded. All patients have been isolated and receiving treatment. Among them, the earliest and most recent cases had onset of illness on December 12 and December 29, 2019 respectively. Contact tracing has identified 163 close contacts and they have been put under medical surveillance. Contact tracing is still ongoing.

Epidemiological investigations revealed that some patients were business operators at a local seafood wholesale market called “華南海鮮城” (華南海鮮批發市場). For the time being, the NHC reported that no evidence of definite human-to-human transmission has been identified and no healthcare workers have been infected. While the causative pathogen and cause of infection are still under investigation, respiratory pathogens including influenza viruses, avian influenza viruses, adenovirus, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome have been ruled out.

According to the risk assessment of the World Health Organization, the reported link of this cluster of pneumonia of unknown aetiology to a wholesale fish and live animal market could indicate an exposure link to animals.

The CHP will continue to maintain close liaison with the NHC and closely monitor the latest development of cluster of pneumonia cases in

Wuhan. We have enhanced the surveillance on pneumonia cases with recent travel history to Wuhan (irrespective of any exposure to wet market or seafood market). Please visit the designated webpage (<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/102465.html>) for updated number of suspected cases reported under the enhanced surveillance and relevant health advice.

Students or staff should wear a mask and consult doctors promptly if they have fever / respiratory symptoms, and inform the doctor of their travel and exposure history. Symptomatic students or staff should not attend schools.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infection, please kindly remind your students / staff to maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes; after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs; or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretion after coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel or hand dryer. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative.
- Cover mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly.
- 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.
- Avoid making close contact with patients, especially those with symptoms of acute respiratory infections.
- Avoid touching animals (including game), poultry / birds or their droppings.
- Avoid visiting wet markets, live poultry markets or farms.
- Do not consume game meat and do not patronize food premises where game meat is served.
- Adhere to food safety and hygiene rules such as avoiding consuming raw or undercooked animal products, including milk, eggs and meat, or foods which may be contaminated by animal secretions, excretions (such as urine) or contaminated products, unless they have been properly cooked, washed or peeled.

Please draw the attention of the students and staff in your school to the above. Thank you for your ongoing support in combating communicable diseases.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read 'SK Chuang', written in a cursive style.

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