

Enquiries to: Dr Penny Hutchinson
Telephone: 0746998240(BH), 07 36461699 (AH)

22 January 2020

Dear Colleagues,

RE: New coronavirus (2019-nCoV) 2019- China

I just wanted to provide an update on the current situation relating to the new coronavirus which has emerged from China.

As of 21 January, 222 confirmed cases of 2019-nCoV have been detected, and four deaths reported. Of the 222 cases:

- 198 have been reported from Wuhan China
- 19 cases have been reported in other regions of China (5 in Beijing and 14 in Guangdong province).
- 5 exported cases have been reported in Thailand (n=2), Japan (n=1), South Korea (n=1) and United States (n=1).
- Of the 198 confirmed cases in Wuhan, 29 have recovered or been discharged, 125 have mild illness, 35 are listed as severe and 9 are in a critical condition.
- There is evidence of limited person-to-person transmission, however, at this time there is no clear evidence of sustained transmission.

Based on the initial analysis of 136 cases in Wuhan, all cases are adults aged between 25 and 89 years of age, with roughly equal numbers between males and females. There have been no cases in children, however, there is insufficient information on whether children are being tested, are asymptomatic or do not have disease

The significant increase in the number of cases has been partially due to increased surveillance and testing of cases.

Who is at risk?

Only people who have travelled to Wuhan, China are considered to be at risk currently. Travellers to other areas of China are not considered to be at risk. This information may change as more becomes known about the characteristics of the virus.

Clinical presentation

- Due to insufficient information the incubation period is not known
- Fever appears to be the single consistent symptom
- Other symptoms include difficulty breathing, non-specific upper respiratory tract infection symptoms such as cough and sore throat. Chest X-rays show bilateral pneumonic infiltrations.
- A number of severe cases have occurred with significant clinical deterioration particularly where co-morbidities occur
- The current definition for a suspected case in Queensland is as follows:
- **Travel to Wuhan within 14 days of symptom onset AND fever or history of fever AND respiratory symptoms**

Recommendations

Clinicians are asked to be alert for patients of any age presenting with respiratory symptoms who meet the suspected case definition above, particularly if they have travelled to and/or from Wuhan. Please ensure that patients presenting with respiratory symptoms and fever, are being asked about travel to Wuhan, China.

What to do if you have a patient with respiratory illness and travel to Wuhan

- Place a surgical mask on the patient
- Undertake an assessment in a private room with the door closed if negative pressure ventilation is not available
- Apply airborne, contact and standard precautions- in particular, where a P2 respirator/ N95 respirator during any assessment
- Notify the Darling Downs Public Health Unit (DDPHU) on 07 46998240 who will assist with conducting a risk assessment for suspected cases.
- Undertake testing for alternative causes as soon as possible, in particular for respiratory viruses using multiplex PCR if available.
- After discussion with DDPHU, you may be advised to take two upper respiratory samples (combined dry nose and throat swabs, or dry nasopharyngeal swabs).

IF YOUR NOT SURE JUST RING ME!

If you have patients who are traveling to Wuhan, China, advise them to avoid living of dead animals, animal markets and contact with sick people, and should wash their hands regularly with soap and water.

If you have any questions at all please contact the public health unit on 07 46998240 (business hours), 07 36461699 (afterhours) or email Penny.Hutchinson@health.qld.gov.au

I will endeavour to keep you informed as more information comes to hand.

Yours sincerely

Dr Penny Hutchinson
Public Health Physician and Director
Darling Downs Public Health Unit