



Messenger

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New Coronavirus discovered in China (ProMed digest)

Chinese scientists investigating a mystery illness that has sickened dozens in central China have discovered a new strain of coronavirus, designated nCoV, a development that will test the country's upgraded capabilities for dealing with unfamiliar infectious diseases.

Among the 300 reported cases, there has been two deaths--one with serious underlying medical conditions. Other respiratory pathogens such as influenza, avian influenza, adenovirus, severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV), and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) have been ruled out as the cause of illness.

The novel coronavirus was genetically sequenced from a sample from one patient and subsequently detected in other patients in the city of Wuhan. China shared the genetic sequence of the novel coronavirus on January 12, 2020, which will be of great value for other countries to develop molecular diagnostic assays. This novel coronavirus is similar to other bat coronaviruses that were a precursor to SARS, according to a source familiar with the new findings. Successful culture isolation of the virus was reported January 7.

Chinese authorities report the disease afflicting patients in Wuhan has been epidemiologically linked to a large seafood and animal market that was closed January 1. Officials admit that some limited person-to-person transmission may be occurring in the community. Additional cases have been detected in Thailand, Japan and one case in the USA (Washington state)

China was criticized for initially covering up SARS, which was first detected in late 2002 but was disclosed only after it began spreading widely, eventually killing 774 people globally, according to the World Health Organization. Beijing overhauled the nation's disease control system after reviews found that initial failures to contain and isolate patients with SARS allowed it to spread across densely populated Southern China.

It is unclear what the underlying source of the new disease is, though the reported link to a wholesale fish and live animal market could indicate an exposure link to animals, the WHO said. Bats, for example, are known reservoirs for coronaviruses, and have been found to transmit the disease to humans through a third vector such as a civet cat, as scientists found in the case of SARS.

The pattern of the unexplained pneumonia cases linked to the market selling seafood and also live game strongly suggests that this is a novel microbe jumping from animal to human, said K.Y. Yuen, Chair Professor of Infectious Diseases at the University of Hong Kong's Faculty of Medicine.

Influenza season 2020

California Public Health authorities characterize this season's activity as "widespread". The County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Laboratory surveillance matches virus activity occurring state-wide and nationally: a predominance of Influenza type B (Victoria) with Influenza Type A H1N12009 strain. Early season detections of Type A H3 have disappeared. We extend our appreciation to all providers who are submitting specimens to support this surveillance effort.

COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY WILL BE CLOSED

**Monday, January 20, 2020 M L King Day
Monday February 12, 2020 Lincoln Day
Monday February 17, 2020 Presidents Day**

**Our courier pick up will resume on
the next scheduled business day**

Questions?

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