

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (24) in DH SEB CD/9/12/1 Pt. 9

25 September 2012

Dear Principal / Person-in-charge,

Human cases of Novel Coronavirus Infection

I would like to draw your attention to two confirmed human cases of novel coronavirus infection reported by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on 23 September, 2012.

The first case was a 60-year-old male Saudi national who died in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) in recent months. The second case was a 49-year-old male Qatari national who had recently travelled to the KSA prior to the onset of illness. He is currently receiving treatment for severe respiratory illness in London. The Health Protection Agency (HPA) of the United Kingdom (UK) conducted laboratory testing and confirmed the presence of a novel coronavirus, which was the same as the one identified from the first case. To date, no additional confirmed case was reported worldwide.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which include viruses that may cause mild illness like common cold as well as severe illness like severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in humans. This newly identified novel coronavirus is different from any that have been previously been identified in humans. Preliminary information has revealed no evidence of illness in contacts of these two cases. According to HPA, both patients presented with acute, serious respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough and shortness of breath. Coronaviruses are typically spread like other respiratory infections such as influenza. This infection is therefore likely to be passed from person to person when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

WHO is currently in the process of obtaining further information to determine the public health implications of these two confirmed cases. The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) has enhanced the surveillance activities to detect any human cases of this novel coronavirus infection especially among returning travelers from KSA or Qatar. So far, no case has been detected in Hong Kong. CHP will be closely monitoring the development.



To prevent outbreaks of novel coronavirus or other respiratory infections, students/children/staff with acute febrile illness should not attend school and should seek early medical attention.

In addition, the following measures are advised:

- Build up good body immunity by having a proper diet, regular exercise and adequate rest, reducing stress and avoiding smoking;
- Maintain good personal and environmental hygiene;
- Keep hands clean and wash hands properly;
- Cover nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and dispose of nasal and mouth discharge properly;
- Wash hands after sneezing, coughing or cleaning the nose;
- Maintain good ventilation;
- Avoid visiting crowded places with poor ventilation; and
- Wear surgical mask and seek medical advice promptly if fever or symptoms of respiratory tract infection develop.

If you notice any increase in respiratory illnesses or absenteeism among your students/children/staff, please report to our Central Notification Office (Tel: 2477 2772; Fax: 2477 2770) for immediate epidemiological investigations and outbreak control.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read 'SK CHUANG', is written over a light blue circular stamp.

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