

IPOPI statement on the current epidemics of new Coronavirus (as of 2020, Feb. 10th)

Coronavirus - what is it?

On 12 December 2019, a cluster of pneumonia cases was reported in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. This has been linked to be caused by a novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV).¹ Coronaviruses are common in many different animal species and it is rare that they infect people and spread between them, but it happens. Recent examples include Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV), and Middle-East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV). The 2019-nCoV is distinct from the previous two coronaviruses.² During previous coronavirus outbreaks, the person-to-person transmission occurred through droplets, contact and fomites, which suggests that the transmission mode of the 2019-nCoV can be similar.³ This is similar to the spread of classic yearly influenza.

Clinical symptoms due to nCoV infection

Human coronaviruses commonly cause mild to moderate illness in people worldwide. So far, the main clinical signs and symptoms reported in this outbreak includes fever, coughing, running nose and might affect the lower airways leading to breathing difficulties and chest radiographs might show bilateral lung infiltrates.⁴ A comprehensive response from the public health sector depending on the severeness of the virus and its spread highlights the fact that the recent nCoV outbreak should be taken seriously, but it should also be contrasted with the seasonal influenzas that in terms of number of patients and spread can pose a bigger threat to patients with a primary immunodeficiency (PID).

Precautions

A respiratory virus that can be spread from person-to-person is a risk for PID patients. Therefore, PID patients should be cautious and keep track of developments of the virus in their region. Whilst immunoglobulin replacement therapy provides protection against a range of infections, it does not guarantee immunity against coronavirus. The World Health Organization's (WHO)⁵ and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC)⁶ recommendations to reduce exposure to and transmission of the coronavirus 2019-nCoV include but are not limited to:

- Avoid close contact with people suffering from acute respiratory infections
- Avoid close contact with anyone who has fever and cough
- People with symptoms of acute respiratory infection should practice cough etiquette (maintain distance, cover coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues or clothing, and wash hands) and wear a respiratory mask.
- Frequent handwashing by using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water, especially after direct contact with ill people or their environment

¹ European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. Infection prevention and control for the care of patients with 2019-nCoV in healthcare settings. ECDC: Stockholm; 2020. Available at: <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/nove-coronavirus-infection-prevention-control-patients-healthcare-settings.pdf> [Accessed 03-02-2020]

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2019 Novel Coronavirus, situation summary. 02-02-2020. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/index.html> [Accessed 03-02-2020].

³ The World Health Organization. Novel Coronavirus(2019-nCoV) Situation Report – 13. 02-02-2020. Available at: https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200202-sitrep-13-ncov-v3.pdf?sfvrsn=195f4010_6 [Accessed 03-02-2020].

⁴ The World Health Organization. Updated WHO advice for international traffic in relation to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus 2019-nCoV. 24-01-2020. Available at: <https://www.who.int/ith/2020-24-01-outbreak-of-Pneumonia-caused-by-new-coronavirus/en/> [Accessed 03-02-2020]

⁵ The World Health Organization. Novel Coronavirus(2019-nCoV) Situation Report – 13. 02-02-2020.

⁶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Prevention & Treatment. 29-01-2020. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html> [Accessed 03-02-2020].



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International travellers who suffer from acute respiratory illness before, during or after travel, are encouraged to seek medical attention and share travel history with their health care provider as soon as possible.

There is currently no vaccine available.

However, updating Influenza vaccination where applicable, to assist in preventing disease with similar symptoms, should be discussed.

PID patients in endemic areas

For PID patients who live in endemic areas, beyond the precautions mentioned above, we advise prompt contact with a doctor if an infection is suspected. Patients should always keep the details of their PID diagnosis and medical charts, medications, PID expert doctor and next of kin at hand, in case urgent medical care is needed. We further recommend continuous monitoring of information from national public health authorities, statements from regional centres for disease prevention and control as well as from the WHO.

IPOPI is monitoring the situation and following developments closely and will continue to update our members if necessary.

This version of the document has been reviewed and validated by the Medical Advisory Panel of IPOPI.

About IPOPI:

IPOPI is the leading advocate for primary immunodeficiencies' patients worldwide working in collaboration with patients, doctors, politicians, regulators, pharmaceutical industry and other relevant stakeholders. IPOPI is the Association of national PID patient organisations currently representing 68 countries.

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