



Novel Coronavirus 2019 Pneumonia News release

by Emergency Operation Center, Department of Disease Control

MOPH announced 6 new confirmed cases of 2019-nCoV; the South Korean tourist case is under investigation.

The Ministry of Public Health (MOPH), via a committee of emerging infectious disease experts from three concentrations, announced six new confirmed cases, of which four are Thai and two Chinese. Regarding the report of South Korean tourist testing positive after a visit to Thailand, that case is still under investigation with South Korea.

This afternoon (4 February 2020) Dr. Suwannachai Wattanayingcharoenchai, Director General of the Department of Disease Control gave an interview. He said that today, a group of experts in emerging infectious diseases in three areas (clinical management, epidemiology, and laboratory) held a conference and reported that there are six additional confirmed novel coronavirus 2019 (2019-nCoV) cases. Four are Thai people, of which two have spouses with recent travel history to Japan, and the other two people are taxi drivers that have had close contact with Chinese passengers. The other two cases are Chinese travelers.

The Ministry of Public Health coordinated with the Japanese International Health Regulations (IHR) national focal point as soon as the laboratory results confirmed infection of 2019-nCoV in order to obtain additional information for further investigation. Up to this date, the health conditions of five of the six cases are getting better. When subsequent laboratory results are negative, the patients will be discharged from the hospital. Among the six cases, the latest case was referred from a private hospital to Bamrasnaradura Infectious Diseases Institute (BIDI) on 3 February 2020. Upon arrival at BIDI, the patient was intubated. The patient was diagnosed with comorbidities of tuberculosis and infection of the 2019-nCoV. The current situation of 2019-nCoV in Thailand reports a total of 25 confirmed cases, with 17 cases currently admitted in hospitals and eight cases that have returned to their homes.

The MOPH, Thailand was informed of another infected 2019-nCoV case in a tourist after visiting Thailand and is now in the middle of verification. The MOPH has worked with the South Korea International Health Regulations (IHR) national focal point, which is one of the mechanisms of coordination of WHO member states. Once more information is provided by the MOPH South Korea, then Thailand will conduct further epidemiological investigations.

However, virologist experts and epidemiological experts including Associate Professor Dr. Tawee Chotpitayasunon, the Advisor to the Department of Disease Control, Thailand expressed the notion that it is not yet determined whether the aforementioned suspected South Korea case was infected in Thailand or not since there were reports of local transmission both in Thailand and South Korea. Therefore, it is feasible that the patient may have been infected from either Thailand or South Korea.

"Please be confident in Thailand's prevention and control measures that have intensively implemented with the screening protocol among arrival passengers. We are beginning exit screening for departure passengers on some flights" said Dr. Suwannachai.