

Thailand Report on January 15, 2020

1. International Situation

January 5, 2020 - The People's Republic of China reported the total number of pneumonia cases under investigation for infection by a novel coronavirus was 59, including 41 confirmed cases, and one death. Six patients are in critical condition and seven patients have been discharged from the hospital. Moreover, 576 close contacts are under observation, and investigations were completed for 187 patients. There were no additional reports between January 6 and 15, 2020.

January 15, 2020 - Hong Kong identified 76 travelers from Wuhan who met the criteria for investigation. Of those, 66 people have been discharged from the hospital, 10 people still remain in the hospital and 53 people have viral infections other than the novel coronavirus as confirmed by laboratory examination e.g. Influenza A, Influenza B, Human Rhinovirus/ Enterovirus and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV).

January 11, 2020 – Singapore identified one pneumonia case suspected with infection of the novel coronavirus. Laboratory examination was negative for novel coronavirus. Currently, the patients are being observed in the hospital.

January 9, 2020 - Taiwan identified 13 patients who met the criteria for investigation. Eleven patients were discharged from the hospital and two patients remain in the hospital while pending laboratory examination results.

January 8, 2020 - The Republic of Korea found one pneumonia case suspected with infection of the novel coronavirus and is waiting for laboratory result. Also 29 close contacts were followed up.

2. International Precaution

The People's Republic of China reported the genome of Novel Coronavirus 2019 or nCoV 2019 in GenBank® on January 11, 2020. On January 14, 2020, the Wuhan City Health Committee released a Q&A about human-human transmission that stated “although there is no evidence of human-to-human, this transmission cannot be ruled out even though the infection rate is low.” Regarding the characteristics of patients (41 cases), most of them are male, adults and elderly. Most of them had a history of going to the South China Seafood Wholesale Market, and several of them have denied visiting that market. However, no incidents of community transmission have been found.

Countries and administrative regions such as the U.S., Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, South Korea, and the Philippines have taken surveillance measures by screening travelers who depart from Wuhan, China for fever and respiratory symptoms. Moreover, they have notified all passengers to take precautions and protect themselves from infection.

On January 15, 2020, Taiwan announced that Novel Coronavirus 2019 is a Communicable Disease Type 5 along with Yellow Fever, SARS, Influenza, MERS, and Marburg Virus Disease. Moreover, they have notified prevention precautions to the public.

3. The Disease Situation in Thailand

The Department of Disease Control has been implementing its surveillance protocol by fever screening of travelers from all direct flights from Wuhan, China to the Suvarnabhumi, Don Mueang, Chiang Mai, and Phuket international airports. During January 3-15, 2020, among 79 flights, 12,499 passengers and aircrew members were screened for respiratory symptoms and febrile illness.

There were 17 people who met the criteria of patients under investigation (PUI). Of those, six PUI sought treatment at government hospitals: three cases in Phuket and Chiang Mai and three cases at Bamrasnaradura Infectious Diseases Institute. None of them had any severe complications. Eleven cases recovered from their illnesses and returned to their homes. A laboratory result identified the novel coronavirus 2019 in one case. The etiologic agents for nine cases were identified as final diagnoses including Influenza A virus (5 cases), Influenza B virus (1 case), Influenza C virus (1 case), Adenovirus (1 case) and Coronavirus OC43 (1 case). There are seven cases in which laboratory results are pending.

4. Thailand Precautions

The Department of Disease Control (DDC), Ministry of Public Health (MOPH), Thailand has scaled up the Emergency Operations Center to Level 2 to closely monitor the ongoing situation both at the national and international levels. The MOPH has also strengthened the surveillance system by screening travelers from Wuhan for viral pneumonia by strictly thermal scan passengers for detecting fever and respiratory symptoms at Suvarnabhumi, Don Mueang, Chiang Mai and Phuket airports. Moreover, surveillance and preparedness to respond to emerging infectious diseases have been enhanced in the government and private hospitals, and areas of tourist attractions. There is integration and ongoing cooperation between the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Tourism and Sport, the Royal Thai Police, and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation. Furthermore, the English situation reports and related information sheets were disseminated through the DDC website (<https://ddc.moph.go.th>) on the Viral Pneumonia banner on the right side.

5. Risk Communication to the Public

- The novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) can be prevented using the principles for respiratory disease prevention, i.e. washing hands, wearing masks and avoiding contact with patients who have a respiratory disease.
- People can still travel to China, however, it is recommended to avoid visiting crowded places and making contact with patients who have respiratory symptoms. If this is unavoidable, people should wear a mask.
- If anyone has symptoms including coughing, sneezing, panting or runny nose within 14 days after departing from Wuhan, China, please seek medical care at the hospital immediately and inform the doctor regarding the history of recent travel to China
- It is recommended to avoid visiting markets selling carcasses or live animals. If touching or handling live animals, people should wear gloves.
- Regularly wash hands with water and soap or use alcohol gel. It is also recommended to avoid using your hands to touch your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Do not use or share personal stuff with others (i.e. handkerchief, glasses, and towels) since pathogens causing respiratory disease can be transmitted to other people through secretions.

You can download the documents related to the novel coronavirus 2019 at <https://ddc.moph.go.th/viralpneumonia/index.html>