



Emerging Respiratory Virus Bulletin – December 31, 2019

Dear Colleagues -

RE: Undiagnosed, atypical pneumonia in central China

You may have seen recent social media reports of a cluster of 27 as yet undiagnosed cases of atypical pneumonia in central China (Wuhan, in Hubei province) during the month of December, notably involving seafood market workers (seven in critical condition). Currently there are no reports of health care workers being affected. A viral pneumonia of unknown origin has been suggested amid much speculation, including concerns about SARS re-emergence.

This message is to let you know that we are aware and following this cluster but that SARS-related fears remain unfounded (and unlikely). Other respiratory pathogens are prevalent at this time of year with influenza-like illness (ILI) and influenza virus activity (foremost A(H3N2)) showing recent increase in China more generally.

We will provide updates as indicated. In the meantime, this serves as useful reminder of routine practices that include travel history and appropriate infection control precautions for all patients presenting with severe acute respiratory illness. Clinicians should consult their Medical Health Officer, infection control practitioner and/or Medical Microbiologist with any questions and/or for further guidance.

Links to some related reports are provided below:

- 1) <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3044050/mystery-illness-hits-chinas-wuhan-city-nearly-30-hospitalised>
- 2) <https://gulfnnews.com/world/asia/china-probes-mystery-pneumonia-outbreak-amid-sars-fears-1.1577788181834>
- 3) <https://news.rthk.hk/rthk/en/component/k2/1500318-20191231.htm>
- 4) <https://promedmail.org/promed-post/?id=6864153>

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