



Editorial on COVID-19 Pandemic

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COVID-19 is a public health threat affecting humankind currently after the emergence and spread of the novel coronavirus or the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2. The virus is believed to have originated from bats and transmitted to humans.

Around 8.5 million peoples are confirmed to have the COVID-19 and more than 450 000 individuals have died of it by June 18, 2020, all over the world. It is transmitted by inhaling or having contact with droplets. The incubation period ranges from 2- 14 days. It manifests mainly with fever, nonproductive cough, and dyspnea. Polymerase chain reaction from various samples like throat swabs, nasal swabs, bronchoalveolar lavage fluid is used to confirm the diagnosis.

High-resolution chest computerized tomography is abnormal in most patients and typical findings are ground glass patchy opacities on both lungs and sub-segmental consolidation. Treatment is largely supportive. The battle of developing vaccines that can halt COVID-19 Pandemic is ongoing and some of those are to be tested in phase III trials. Remdesivir, an antiviral was found to shorten recovery time of COVID-19 patients in preliminary result of a trial. Dexamethasone was found to reduce mortality by one-third among seriously sick COVID-19 patients requiring mechanical ventilation.

In December 2019, an outbreak of unusual pneumonia was reported in Wuhan, Hubei, China with many cases linked to Huanan Seafood Market that sells seafood and live exotic animals. Two patients, who had fever, cough, and bilateral ground-glass opacities on both lungs with patchy infiltration were confirmed to have a novel coronavirus from the bronchoalveolar lavage sample. Both patients had reported independent contact history with this market. Environmental samples (33 out of 585 samples) from the Huanan seafood market also tested positive, implying that the virus had originated from the market. It is noted that most epidemic is caused by viral cross-species transmission from animals to human.

Similar viral outbreaks albeit in a smaller range had occurred during 2002/3 where severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) affected 8422 persons with 916 deaths (case fatality rate of 11%)(3). Likewise in 2012, a coronavirus caused respiratory illness named Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) first reported in Saudi Arabia and has affected 2494 persons till November 2019 in 27 countries and had resulted in 858deaths. Both the SARS CoV and MERS-CoV have originated from bats and the intermediate hosts were palm civet cats and dromedary camels in SARS CoV and MERS-CoV respectively(4–8).

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The outbreak of COVID-19 is believed to be fueled by the migration of the Chinese for the Chinese New Year. The outbreak has spread to other parts of China and later to other countries.

