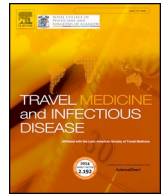




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Outbreak of novel Corona virus (2019-nCoV); implications for travelers to Pakistan



Dear Editor,

A recent publication showed the illness among travelers returning from a mass gathering of religious purpose between August 2015 and April 2019 [1]. China is the most populated country having 1.428 billion human population and having 23 provinces. Wuhan city has 11 million human population and referred as Chicago of China due to its extensive domestic transportation. A recent outbreak of 2019-nCoV has been reported in Wuhan city, Hubei province. Until January 10th, 2020 a total of 41 cases of 2019-nCoV were reported during December 8th, 2019 till January 2nd, 2020 [2].

Different factors were responsible for this outbreak. Based on preliminary findings these factors have been identified. The first and the most important reason is the seafood market in the city of Wuhan. Initial findings suggested that most of the patients affected during the outbreak were exposed to Huanan seafood market [1]. Market has been closed as of January 1st, 2020. To overcome this health issue, trading of suspected animals from Wuhan should be carried out after screening. Trading routes should be monitored from the site of outbreak. Transmission of the infection has been reported from animals to humans. However, the specific animals responsible for infection should be identified and further control and prevention strategies must be developed and adopted. This outbreak has brought back the memories of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) Coronavirus (SARS-CoV) in 2002–2003 outbreak. In this outbreak 3000 people were infected and by 2004, 774 people had died [3]. Another outbreak reported in 2012 in Saudi Arabia. The Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) outbreak occurred in 27 countries infecting 2465 people and causing 850 deaths [4]. Previous outbreaks reflecting the severity of threat and if ignored can cause serious health problem. This threat shouldn't be taken lightly and strict actions must be taken to avoid human and economic loss.

It raised concerns regarding the emergence of a serious threat to public health. Neighboring countries were warned about the threat and been asked to be vigilant [2,5]. As, on 13 Jan 2020, a Chinese tourist visiting Thailand has been diagnosed with the 2019-nCoV infection [6]. Pakistan being the neighboring country of China is at risk. Pakistan has taken some preventive measures; thermal scanners at four major airports in the country have been installed. Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore and Peshawar airports have been equipped with thermal scanners and all the flights coming from China will be scanned and suspicious passengers will be quarantine. PIA, Pakistan's national carrier has an-

nounced that all the passengers travelling from Beijing will undergo medical check-up at Beijing airport before boarding the flight [7]. However, earlier special assistant to Prime Minister on health Dr. Zafar Mirza said that country lacks diagnostic ability to detect 2019-nCoV. Suspicious samples will be sent to labs in China and Netherlands for testing. Government of Pakistan requested Chinese Government to provide diagnostic kits for screening of infection [8].

Diagnostic and treatment facilities should be provided across the country specially in the high risk areas. Massive awareness campaigns about the 2019-nCoV infection should be carried out on large scale to educate the general population about the precautionary measures.

Funding

Not applicable.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest or financial disclosure about this publication.

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmaid.2020.101571>

Received 29 January 2020; Received in revised form 31 January 2020; Accepted 3 February 2020

Available online 04 February 2020

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