

# Health, Welfare & Food Bureau

## SARS Bulletin

### (29 May 2003)

#### Summary of Cases

On 28 May, 10 more patients with Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) had recovered from the disease and been discharged from hospitals, hence increasing the total number of recovered patients to 1,295 (i.e., 74.9% of all 1,730 SARS cases). Out of the 1,730 cases, 381 involved health care workers or medical students. There were 165 SARS patients remaining in hospitals, in which 63 patients were undergoing convalescence before discharge and 33 patients were receiving treatment in the intensive care units. There were 8 suspected cases under treatment, and the cumulative total of fatal cases was 270.

2. On 28 May, 2 more patients were confirmed to have SARS. Since 16 May, the daily number of newly confirmed SARS cases has fallen below 5 for the 13<sup>th</sup> consecutive day, and the average number of newly confirmed cases in the past week was 2 per day.

3. The epidemic curve (28 May) below shows the current status of 1,701 cases with confirmed onset date (i.e. 98% of all 1,730 cases). Their current status by age groups was shown in Table 1.

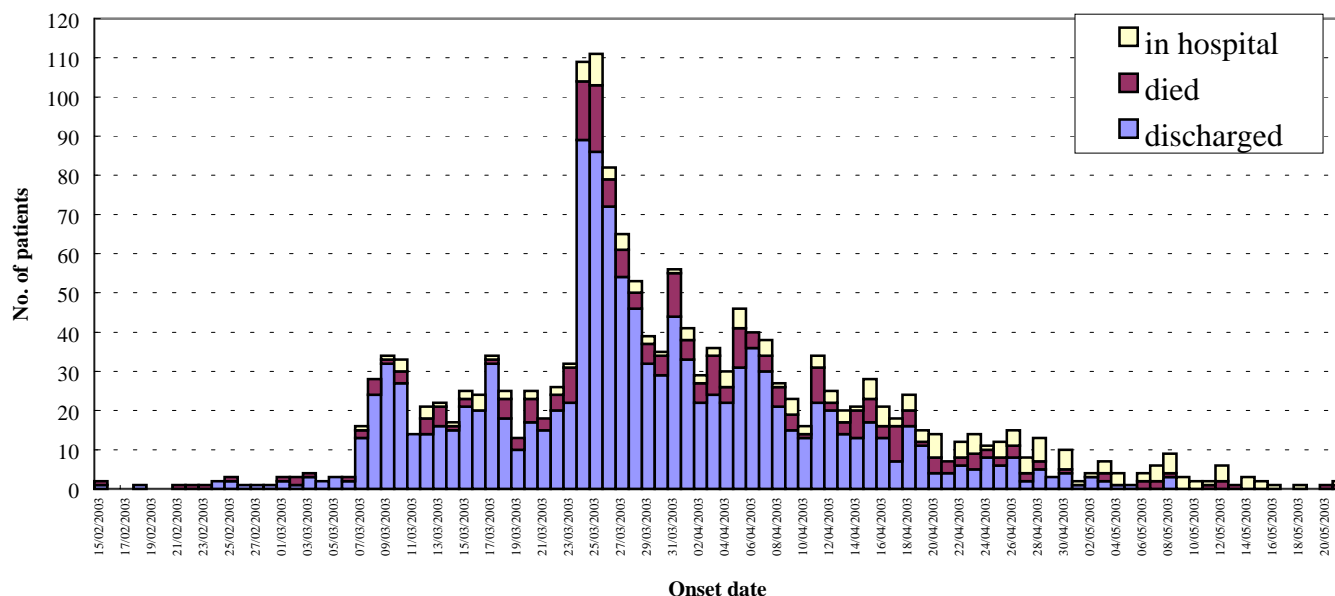


Table 1

Age Group	Percentage in respect of total within the row*		
	In hospital	Died	Recovered & discharged
0 – 14 years old	7.5%	0.0%	92.5%
15 – 64 years old	9.1%	7.5%	83.4%
65 years old or above	18.8%	55.8%	25.4%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>10.8%</b>	<b>15.8%</b>	<b>73.5%</b>

\* Percentages within the row may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

4. As shown in Table 1, about 73.5% of the 1,701 cases have recovered and been discharged from hospitals, 10.8% are still in hospital and 15.8% have died. Among the children group (aged 0 – 14 years old), the proportion of recovered cases was high and there was no fatal case in this group. Among the elderly group (aged 65 years old or above), the proportion of recovered cases was much lower (25.4% compared to the overall average of 73.5%) and the proportion of fatal cases was much higher (55.8% compared to the overall average of 15.8%).

5. For patients who are still in hospital and have confirmed onset date (including those who are undergoing convalescence before discharge), the distribution of their onset dates are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Onset Dates (in 14-day periods)	Percentage of Cases
On or before 12 March	4.4%
13 March to 26 March	17.5%
27 March to 9 April	19.7%
10 April to 23 April	25.1%
24 April to 7 May	20.8%
8 May to 21 May	12.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Note: Percentages may not add up to total due to rounding.

## **Ongoing Development**

### *Health Checks at Border Points*

6. Since 29 March, medical posts have been set up at the airport, ports and border points to watch for travellers displaying symptoms of SARS, and all incoming passengers are required to complete a health declaration. Temperature checks for all arriving, departing and transit passengers at the Hong Kong International Airport have also been implemented since mid-April.

7. As regards other control points, arriving passengers via ports and land boundary crossings are subject to temperature screening in addition to health declaration with effect from 26 April. Since mid-May, departing passengers from the Hong Kong Macao Ferry Terminal and the China Ferry Terminal, and all passengers departing for the Mainland by through trains are required to undergo temperature checks before leaving Hong Kong. In addition, all close contacts of confirmed SARS patients are barred from leaving Hong Kong during their home confinement period.

8. As at 28 May, 2 passengers had been confirmed to have SARS since the implementation of all the above health checking measures.

### *Home Confinement*

9. All household contacts of confirmed or suspected SARS patients are required to undergo home confinement for monitoring and treatment up to a maximum of 10 days. As at 28 May, 32 persons (from 8 households) were under this home confinement requirement. So far a total of 1,232 persons (from 483 households) had been affected by this requirement, of whom 33 of them were later confirmed to have SARS.

## **Health Advice/Further Information**

### *Wearing Mask*

10. SARS can be transmitted by respiratory droplets over a short distance or through direct contact with a patient's secretions. To prevent contracting the disease, it is important to observe good personal hygiene and build up body immunity by developing a healthy lifestyle. Wearing a mask properly offers satisfactory protection against SARS and other respiratory tract infections, and is one of the ways to prevent spread of the infection. Surgical masks, if properly worn, are effective in preventing the spread of droplet infections. The following people should wear a facemask:

- People with respiratory infection symptoms.
- People who care for patients with respiratory infection symptoms.
- People who have been in close contact with confirmed or suspected SARS patients should wear a mask for at least 10 days from the last contact.
- People visiting clinics or hospitals.
- Health care workers in clinical settings.
- Workers handling food.
- Public transport operational staff.
- People at crowded or poorly ventilated places.
- Pupils and staff at schools. (Except during physical education lessons or in a well-ventilated and spacious venue with no "short distance face-to-face activity" involved.)

11. As the list cannot be exhaustive, members of the public are reminded to exercise judgement in accordance with guidance given above. In general, anyone who feels the need to wear a mask is advised to do so, and please remember:

- Always keep a mask handy so that you can put one on as the need arises.
- Wash hands before putting on a facemask, before and after taking one off.

- Follow the instructions given by the supplier.

12. More information on wearing mask is available at the following web page: <http://www.info.gov.hk/dh/diseases/ap/eng/facemask.htm>.

### Further Information

13. To empower the public in fighting against the SARS, the Department of Health (DH) has issued advices and guidelines on prevention of the disease for various sectors. Publicity programmes have been made to educate the public on all aspects of the disease, including the symptoms, the mode of transmission, the importance of seeking early treatment and various preventive measures namely personal and environmental hygiene. Health education information is available on the 24-hour pre-recorded hotlines (2833 0111) and has been uploaded onto DH's homepage (<http://www.info.gov.hk/dh>). A hotline (187 2222) has also been provided for public enquiries.

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Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region