

(Translation)  
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Guangzhou City Government News Conference  
Two people died in Guangzhou till now  
(11 February 2003)

(Photo)

Director of Health Bureau in Guangzhou, Huang Jionglie, explaining the situation of atypical pneumonia in Guangzhou.

(Photo)

News Conference in progress

(Photo)

Deputy Secretary General of Guangzhou Government, Zhang Huoying, Speaking at the conference.

(Photo)

Deputy Mayor of Guangzhou, Chen Chuanyu, Speaking at the conference.

Guangzhou City Government held a news conference at 10:30 this morning. Huang Jionglie, Director of Health Bureau in Guangzhou, reported on the situation of atypical pneumonia in Guangzhou.

At the end of last year, atypical pneumonia cases were reported in certain parts of Guangdong Province. Since 12 January 2003, some of the seriously ill patients have been transferred to some major hospitals in Guangzhou for treatment. During the period around Lunar New Year, local cases were detected in Guangzhou region. To date, more than a hundred of cases have been reported in Guangzhou.

Pneumonia is an infectious disease commonly detected in winter and spring seasons. But unlike those in the past years, most pneumonia cases reported this year are atypical with a quick onset and fever as the first symptom.

Patients may also develop apparent respiratory symptoms of dry and unproductive coughs. Despite its quick onset, there is a low risk of fatality. The conditions of most patients are not serious with fever as the major symptom. All existing cases have been properly treated and the conditions of the great majority of patients are under control. Some patients have already been discharged after recovery. As at February 9, two people died among all cases detected in Guangzhou City.

Current situation shows that the disease is infectious and is mainly transmitted through close contact with the respiratory droplets or secretions of the patients. The risk of contracting the disease is generally low unless there is close contact with infected patients suffering from fever.

There are over a hundred cases in Guangzhou City, many of whom are healthcare workers who worked in a few local hospitals where there was neither enough awareness of the disease nor adequate supply of protective gear. They were infected while in close contact with seriously ill patients who came for treatment from places outside Guangzhou. So far, no healthcare workers have been infected in hospitals with adequate and active precautionary measures in place and full awareness of the disease. There is clinical proof that healthcare workers can avoid being infected by strictly complying with the relevant procedures.

The City of Guangzhou has been affected by the disease for more than a month now. The patients are all under effective treatment and their condition under control. There is no need to panic. People generally would not be infected if they follow the guidelines issued by relevant departments of the Guangzhou Province and Guangzhou City by avoiding close contact with patients suffering from fever, maintaining good ventilation of household and working environment, and avoiding excessive fatigue. People are advised to seek early medical treatment at nearby hospitals if they develop such symptoms.

Recently, all sorts of rumors about the disease have been spreading around in the community. It has been described as a biological attack, an inexplicable virus attack, and the spread of plague. All these have been found to be nothing but rumors. The public are urged not to believe in such rumors so as to avoid unnecessary worry and inconvenience.