China & International COVID-19 Update

The following update is based on direct links with people in the Chinese medical & business communities, Chinese-origin folks living in Canada, WHO reports, and miscellaneous reports from the Chinese press.

Direct Reports
Cases diagnosed with COVID-19 in the Wuhan epicenter reached a peak number of 50,633 on Feb 18, and then constantly decreased. The number of discharged patients has now outpaced the new patients. One of the temporary modular field hospitals built exclusively for confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 has discharged most of their patients.

There is no longer a shortage of PPE for medical workers in the hospitals of Wuhan. Items such as adult diapers and feminine hygiene items are stocked in medical pharmacies. The last two items are important because of the long hours that medical personnel worked: they could not take off PPE during rest and meal breaks because of the former shortages. A Chinese ad-hoc expatriate group in the Vancouver Canada area had donated 4,000 pairs of eyewear to Wuhan hospitals. This group has ceased sending donations. They report there is adequate supply within China and the amount of foreign-based donations has overwhelmed the logistics supply chain.

Anecdotally, many personal friends in China (outside Wuhan) voluntarily went into self-isolation for the last month. Chinese-Canadians returning from New Year Festivities typically went into self-isolation even if they did not have signs & symptoms of infectious respiratory disease. This is a tradition dating from the 2003 SARS period. Such ‘protect myself and others’ activities are of key importance for restricting the propagation of the COVID-19.

International Statistics

Given the lag time in reporting, the differences between WHO surveillance and the HK CHP are negligible. A major difference is that the CHP produces graphs (https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/statistics_of_the_cases_novel_coronavirus_infection_en.pdf). This last link updates automatically. The blue graph at the bottom shows a bell curve for new confirmed cases.

CHP data for Mainland China shows 80,270 confirmed dx and 2981 deaths. Crude death rate = 3%. The discharge rate is about 62% (based on about 50,000 cases) although there are still about 6,400 serious cases still in hospital.

Chinese Press
The Chinese press, which typically emphasizes good news, reported Feb 27 that the production of medical masks in China is about 30 million/day or 7.8 times more than the number of Feb 1.
Government & private companies within the country are starting to donate PPE to foreign countries. The Shanghai government donated 100,000 surgical masks and 400,000 N95 masks to Korea. The online private retail company Alibaba donated 1 million medical masks to Japan.

**Analysis:**
Skepticism about official reports from Mainland China is widespread. This report relies on information supplied directly by non-government sources, Chinese citizens and expatriates, and the Hong Kong CHP. It also includes data from the WHO; the CHP & WHO data compare favorably and basically cite the same numbers.

The raw data indicates that the spread of COVID-19 inside China is increasingly contained due to aggressive medical intervention, quarantine/self-isolation, rapid mobilization to construct dedicated treatment centers, and tightly knit alignment of governmental-social-financial capital.

The blue graph located at the bottom of the Hong Kong CHP report shows a bell curve which is typical of the start, peak, and tail of epidemics. The COVID-19 is a novel virus, so not much is known about its ability to re-emerge within China. However, based on the data, cautious optimism can be expressed about the situation in China.

**Outside China**
The international COVID-19 data is demonstrating similar trends in different countries to the beginning of the epidemic in China. Different countries, based on their specific cultures and institutions, will have different capacities to constrain and prevent the disease. WHO surveillance data and graphics detailed in the daily situation reports show the international spread of the COVID-19 and define the countries where the situation is the most difficult.

**AIHA Coronavirus Outbreak Resource Center**
Please refer to the AIHA Coronavirus Outbreak Resource Center (https://www.aiha.org/public-resources/consumer-resources/coronavirus_outbreak_resources) for knowledge and prevention methods to protect workers, their families, and communities.