

SYNOPSIS

02/20/2020

Review of “Evidence of SARS-CoV-2 infection in returning travelers from Wuhan, China”

Article citation: Hoehl S, Berger A, Kortenbusch M, Cinatl J, Bojkova D, Rabenau H, et al. Evidence of SARS-CoV-2 infection in returning travelers from Wuhan, China. N Engl J Med. 2020 Feb 18 [Epub ahead of print]. Available from: <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc2001899>

One-Minute Summary

- This study reports on the symptoms and laboratory test results of 126 individuals who were evacuated from Wuhan, China to Germany on February 1, 2020.
- Of the 126 individuals, 10 were isolated on the flight for various reasons (including: symptoms, exposure history to a confirmed case in Wuhan and individuals wishing to accompany family members with suspected COVID-19 or other health problems) and were immediately transferred to hospital upon arrival in Germany.
- Of the remaining 116 individuals, 115 passed symptom-based screening upon arrival. Of these, 114 patients were tested for SARS-CoV-2. **Two of the 114 evacuees, both of whom had passed symptom-based screening, tested positive.**
- This study suggests that **individuals who have no fever and minimal or no symptoms can shed potentially infectious virus.**

Additional Information

- For symptom-based screening, individuals were asked to report **current symptoms** of fever, fatigue, sore throat, cough, runny nose, myalgia and diarrhea; individuals were examined by a physician and had their temperature taken.
- Following isolation and further evaluation in hospital of the two asymptomatic patients, a faint rash and minimal pharyngitis were observed in one patient. This same patient recalled mild symptoms several days prior to testing (myalgia, dry cough and ear pain) after a more detailed symptom history was obtained.
- Both patients remained afebrile and well seven days after hospital admission.
- The patients were tested by RT-PCR of a throat swab. Cycle thresholds were 24.4 and 30.3. Results were confirmed with cell culture.
- Neither patient recalled any contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case.

PHO Reviewer’s Comments

None.

Citation

Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Review of “Evidence of SARS-CoV-2 infection in returning travelers from Wuhan, China.” Toronto, ON: Queen’s Printer for Ontario; 2020.

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