

2nd BILMUN
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Study Guide



WHO

Combating the Corona Virus

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i. Introduction to the Committee

The **World Health Organization (WHO)** is a specialized organ of the United Nations which is tasked with overseeing public health. Established on 7 April 1948, and headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, the WHO is a successor of the Health Organisation, which used to be a specialized agency of the League of Nations.

The WHO has played a critical role historically in eliminating smallpox and other diseases. Currently, it plays the most important role in eradicating communicable diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, Ebola Virus, Malaria and the NCOV (Novel Corona Virus). It also works for reducing the effects of non-communicable diseases, such as, cancers, heart diseases and cataracts etc.

With these endeavors, the WHO plays not only the role of elimination and mitigation (reduction) of global epidemics and viruses but also driving research into improving local public health systems and cures to viruses and vaccines.

Apart from these roles, the WHO is extremely important for awareness campaigns and developing effective reporting, publication and networking for diseases and public health standards. The WHO works in close coordination with governments, local lawmakers and other UN organs such as UNAIDS for these purposes.

WHO is known to enact international special programs to deal with certain health epidemics such as the Global Malaria Programme which works to keep track of malaria cases, and the Global Polio Eradication Initiative.



II. Introduction to the Topic

Key Terms and Definitions:

Global Epidemic:

a widespread occurrence of a disease across the globe at a particular time

Quarantine:

is a restriction on the movement of people and goods who may have been exposed to a communicable disease, but do not have a confirmed medical diagnosis, to ensure the control of diseases and illnesses

Xenophobia

Dislike, hatred or prejudice against people from other countries and nations

Virus Carrier:

An individual or group of individuals that carry or transmit a virus of disease and risk spreading it to other unaffected individuals

Practitioner

Doctors or other professional medical staff members that are in close contact with patients for treatment purposes

Transmission

The spread of virus or diseases from one person to another/ transfer of disease



II. NCOV (Novel Corona Virus) Outbreak- Introduction

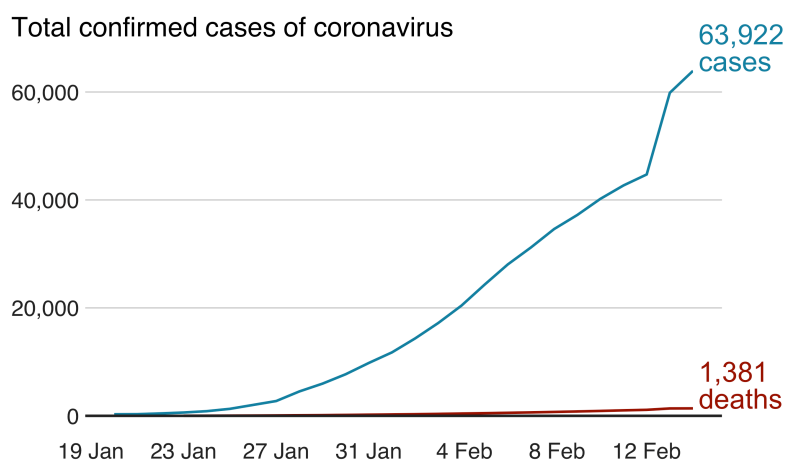
The **COVID-19 outbreak** or the novel coronavirus outbreak is a global epidemic that began from Wuhan, capital of Hubei province in China in December 2019. It has been declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) by the World Health Organization (WHO). Currently, more than 67,109 cases have been diagnosed, including in every province-level division of China, and furthermore, 10,627 people in China are in seriously dangerous clinical conditions.

To control the spread of NCOV, China has introduced lockdowns in Hubei, quarantines in the Wuhan province and restrictions have been imposed on citizens which have affected more than 170 million people. Furthermore, numerous countries have also restricted flight movement and travel to and from mainland China. Individuals who have travelled to China and returned to home countries have been placed under strict monitoring and observed for 2 weeks. Apart from flight cancellations, airports have also been stationed with multiple checks of body temperature and health checks to ensure nobody is a carrier of the virus.

Apart from health harms and deaths, there has been mass hysteria and misinformation regarding the coronavirus which has affected the lives of numerous Asian and Chinese individuals due to racism and mass xenophobia.

Currently there are no vaccines or curative mechanisms existing for the virus with most work being done for prevention and control during early symptom stage.

More than 60,000 cases in China so far



China National Health Commission, BBC Research, 14 Feb



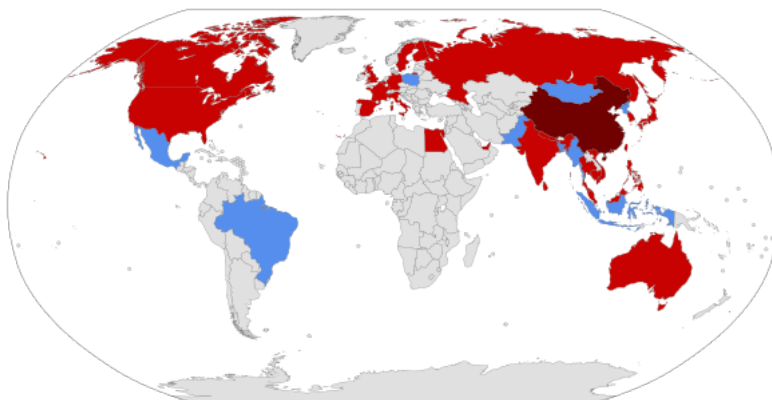


III. Timeline of Events and Statement of the Problem

In Wuhan, during December 2019, numerous individuals were observed displaying the symptoms of a "pneumonia" and were traced back to the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market, which has thousands of stalls of fish, pheasants, bats and even venomous snakes. The NCOV or Novel Corona Virus was acquired from either snakes or bat meat being sold in the market in Wuhan.

Coronaviruses mainly occur among animals but have been known to transfer and cause coronavirus outbreaks in humans as in the cases of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) Virus which caused an epidemic earlier as well. NCOV is known to transfer between people and is contagious. Transmission of Coronaviruses occur among close contacts with infected individuals through either sneezing or coughing. Of cases that began before 1 January 2020, 55% were linked to the market. By 22 January, this figure was reported to have dropped to 8.6%.

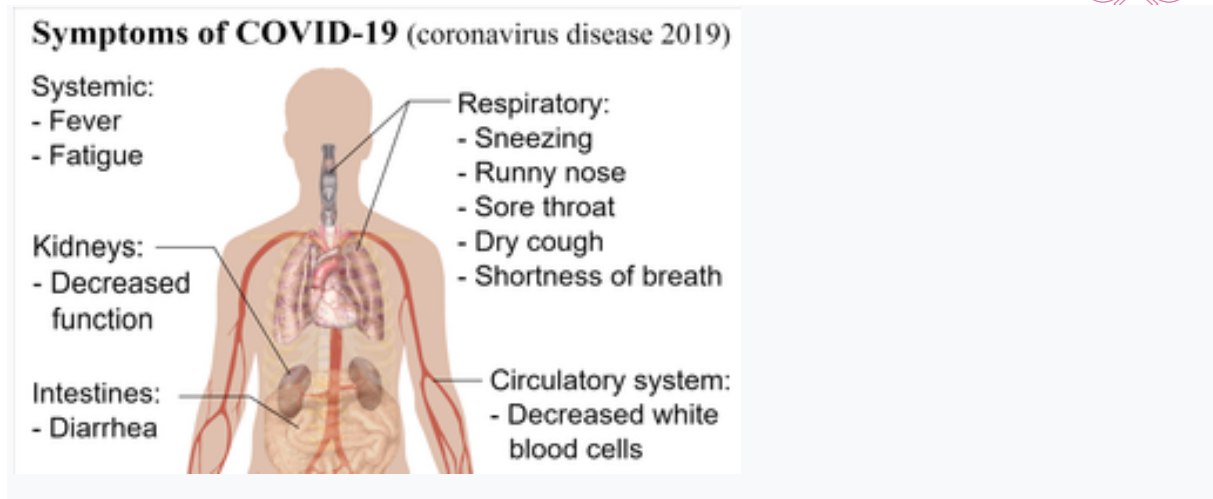
On 20 January, China reported a sharp rise in cases with nearly 140 new patients, including two people in Beijing and one in Shenzhen. On 12 February, the Hubei government expanded its definition of confirmed cases, which now includes clinically diagnosed patients diagnosed by their symptoms and CT scans.



Map of the 2019–20 COVID-19 outbreak

- Confirmed cases reported
- Suspected cases reported

Symptoms of NCOV:



1. Upper respiratory symptoms, such as sneezing, a runny nose, and sore throat continue to be observed in patients.
2. Severe infection can result in pneumonia, kidney failure, and death.
3. Diarrhea and a reduction in White Blood Cells is also common in affected individuals. The virus seems to start with a fever, followed by dry cough and then leads to shortness of breath and hyperventilation.

After close observation and in-depth analysis, Chinese scientists were able to isolate a strain of the coronavirus and publish the genetic sequence so that laboratories across the world could independently develop tests to detect infection by the virus.



Problems Resulting from NCOV Outbreak

One of the major problems that developing countries face currently is the lack of resources, including financial resources and medical equipment to deal with the virus treatment and even detecting patients. There is a need for there to be greater cross-border assistance to ensure that early cases of NCOV are dealt with. Even countries like China have faced a lack of facemasks and such shortages need to be addressed promptly by the International community.

Furthermore, there is a need to prevent NCOV from becoming a point of isolating China and Chinese citizens. Since the outbreak occurred, Asian individuals have faced increased xenophobia, racism and prejudices. In such a time, it is important for the WHO to ensure awareness campaigns are carried out across the board. Furthermore, Chinese citizens who have tried to speak up regarding the epidemic have faced mass censorship and restrictions.

The virus is dangerous as it threatens the global economy as mainland China is a manufacturing hub. Tourism in China and places affected by NCOV has also been hit and numerous flight carriers and countries have restricted travel to and from China, including a stop on VISAS.

Many countries, including France, the United Kingdom, the United States and Japan, have evacuated their nationals from the Wuhan and Hubei provinces.

IV. Previous Actions and Potential Solutions

As with any mass outbreak, there is a three-way approach that is taken, consisting of measures of prevention individually, controlling the spread through infected patients and researching potential cures and vaccines.



Preventive Measures

Numerous WHO recommendations have urged people for “washing hands with soap and water repeatedly, not touching one's eyes, nose or mouth unless the hands are clean, and covering the mouth when one coughs”. Avoidance of farm animals and thorough cooking of any meat is also a strong advice. Furthermore, it has been recommended for suspect individuals to wear a surgical mask (especially when in public) and call a doctor for medical advice to prevent further transmission. Medical practitioners and individuals in close contact with affected patients are advised to wear protective clothing as well as disinfecting shared equipment and isolating patients and limiting movements of individuals who are suspects.

However, the problem still remains as to how well this information can be spread and awareness campaigns can be put into place, especially in developing countries with weak medical aid systems.

Furthermore, numerous countries have a lack of basic medical equipment such as masks, clothing and respiratory equipment to deal with the outbreak. Limited funding affects these countries as well.

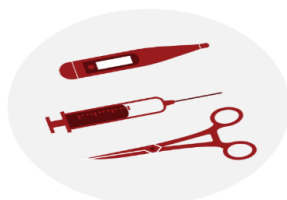
Recommended measures for hospital staff dealing with coronavirus



Isolate patients
and limit their movement



Wear protective clothing
such as medical mask,
eye protection, gloves and gown



Disinfect shared equipment
between patient use



Wash hands after patient contact

Source: World Health Organization

BBC



Measures of Control: Quarantines

The Chinese Government has also imposed a quarantine on travelling within Wuhan to control the spread of the virus from the affected zone. From permanent halts on modes of transport, including flights, trains, public buses, the metro system, even public gathering, meetings and tours are suspended. By 24 January 2020, a total of 15 cities in Hubei were placed in these curfew-like conditions.

However, due to these quarantine measures, residents rushed to stockpile essential goods, food, and fuel, increasing the prices of basic commodities for citizens.

4 cities of China: Wenzhou, Hangzhou, Ningbo and Taizhou, were also placed under the "passport" system, allowing only one person per household to leave their home every two days.

Apart from curfews and restrictions within China, numerous cruise ships were also quarantined when passengers on board were seen to have symptoms similar to NCOV.

These include The Costa Smeralda which was quarantined in Italy, after passengers developed flu-like symptoms – the quarantine was lifted when tests for the virus came back negative. Two further ships were quarantined on 5 February: Diamond Princess in the Port of Yokohama, Japan and World Dream.

Diamond Princess continues to remain quarantined in Japanese waters and is managed/ quarantined by the Japanese government. The presence of numerous foreign citizens including Americans continues to be an issue that needs to be addressed.

Another way of dealing with affected individuals or individuals exhibiting similar symptoms has been through construction of specialty hospitals. Numerous specialty hospitals have been built in Wuhan province in record time to act as a countermeasure against the outbreak and to better quarantine the patients. Isolation facilities have also been constructed in other countries near airports to better house and quarantine affected individuals.

For treating individuals, although medication is not currently available normal flu medications and drinking fluids are suggested by medical aid practitioners. Furthermore, measures such as oxygen therapy is also used in severe cases. However, numerous countries need assistance currently to be prepared in case the virus spreads.



Measures of Cure: Researching Vaccines

Several organizations around the world are currently researching vaccines or any antiviral medicines and drugs to deal with the virus. These include the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CCDC) and a Russian consumer health watchdog Rospotrebnadzor. However, coordination needs to be done with the WHO's mandate to ensure that there is a swifter discovery of the required vaccine.

- Role of WHO?

WHO is long known to help national governments and their financing and provision of standardized treatment.

In 1988, WHO launched the Global Polio Eradication Initiative to eradicate polio and worked in coordination with Rotary International, the US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Even with NCOV there is room now for WHO to assist local governments and ensure partnerships are made to improve the delivery of services and medical aid, as well as ensuring that affected individuals are treated and isolated effectively by governments.



V. Questions A Resolution Must Answer

1. What role can the WHO play in restricting the global spread of NCOV and increasing awareness?
2. What measures, if any, should be taken to assist Chinese authorities for researching a vaccine and controlling the virus?
3. How will developing countries with weak healthcare systems deal with a potential spread? How will funds be generated and allocated?
4. How can global safety standards be practically upheld without isolating Chinese authorities and citizens?
5. What future preventive measures should be taken to increase awareness regarding viruses?



VI. Further Reading:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/02/egypt-confirms-coronavirus-case-africa-200214190840134.html>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/02/clone.of.cloneofchina-coronavirus-outbreak-latest-.html>

<https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-51235105>

<https://www.businessinsider.com/couple-in-wuhan-describe-life-under-quarantine-amid-coronavirus-2020-2>

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/noncommunicable-diseases>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/listeningpost/2020/02/speaking-coronavirus-cost-200215110918298.html>

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/14/805289669/how-covid-19-kills-the-new-coronavirus-disease-can-take-a-deadly-turn>

<https://www.wisemee.com/mun/delegate/>