

CARTAS AL EDITOR

Covid-19 Wuhan

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Dear editors Practice Familiar Rural:

I am writing in regards to the rapidly evolving novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) outbreak, centered in Wuhan (Hubei Province), People's Republic of China.

Coronaviruses are an incredibly diverse family of viruses, found in many animal species, and are commonly encountered in clinical practice during the cold and flu season. We often encounter the common coronaviruses (HKU1, NL63, 229E and OC43) in our surveillance and epidemiological studies in schools, clinics and long-term care settings.

Two other coronaviruses have been previously shown to infect humans: SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome-associated coronavirus [SARS-CoV]) which emerged in 2003 and MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus [MERS-CoV]) that emerged in 2012. Both SARS and MERS are associated with high case fatality rates.

The novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is spread primarily through respiratory droplets and secretions, broadcast through coughing and sneezing. There is also emerging evidence that 2019-nCoV may be spread through feces (fecal-oral route), but this is far less common. Coronaviruses do not persist for any significant time on surfaces and require relatively close contact (within 4-6 feet) with an infected individual. Consequently, use of face masks, hand washing and appropriate respiratory hygiene are the best ways to avoid becoming infected with coronaviruses and other respiratory viruses.

At present, most cases are occurring in the People's Republic of China. Accordingly, there have been travel warnings and some entry restrictions for individuals traveling to and from areas of higher prevalence. As of today, there are no cases reported in South America or Africa.

We are extremely early in this rapidly expanding outbreak. With this evolving situation comes fear, misinformation, and many unknowns. Accordingly, clinicians need to find reliable and up-to-date sources of credible information. A good place to start is at the CDC resource page for healthcare professionals: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/guidance-hcp.html>



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Kind Regards,

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