

Caritas Tuen Mun Marden Foundation Secondary School
2019-2020 S.1 Liberal Studies
Newspaper Refection (6)

Name: _____

Class: S.1LS

Date: _____

Please read the following newspaper carefully and answer the questions at the back page.

The risk of "limited human-to-human transmission"

MORE THAN a fortnight has passed since a string of pneumonia cases involving a novel coronavirus was first reported in Wuhan. In view of the absence of new cases since January 3 and zero reports of infected healthcare workers, a German virologist assisting the World Health Organisation (WHO) with responding to the outbreak believes the virus may not be highly contagious and is cautiously optimistic about the prospect of fighting the epidemic.

Still, many puzzles about the outbreak remain to be solved. For example, the fact that two people in the confirmed cases in Wuhan are a couple has raised concerns about the possibility of "limited human-to-human transmission". The confirmed case in Thailand of an infected traveller from Wuhan has also highlighted the risk of the virus emerging outside China. The transmissibility of a virus can multiply after mutation.

Greater transparency in the release of information will help reduce suspicions and mistrust. Regarding the possibility of limited human-to-human transmission of the virus, WHO has indicated that the odds of a wider spread of the outbreak are still there and it is necessary to be prepared for that. Hong Kong must remain highly alert and the mainland authorities must also broaden the scope of their surveillance and increase the transparency of their information.

The outbreak of the Wuhan pneumonia has revived horrible memories among Hong Kong people as well as the global community of the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak in 2003. In the current outbreak, there are altogether 41 cases of confirmed diagnosis on the mainland, dated from December 8 last year to January 2, 2020. Around 70% of the patients were frequenters of Wuhan's Huanan Wholesale Seafood Market, but a small number of patients denied having been there. According to the genetic map shared by the mainland, the genetic sequence of the novel virus bears a 70-to-80% resemblance to the SARS virus.

Christian Drosten, a German authority on virology who is assisting WHO with tackling the new virus, thinks that it is of the same type as SARS, only that they are of different forms. But fortunately, international experts generally agree that according to available information, the outbreak is not very serious yet.

The situation of infection among healthcare workers is an indicator of the transmissibility of a virus. Hong Kong people still have fresh memories of the widespread infection of SARS among healthcare workers when the outbreak began in the city's hospitals. By comparison, the Wuhan pneumonia caused by the novel coronavirus has not infected any healthcare workers so far. Drosten thinks it shows that the virus is not easily transmissible from human to human. The absence of syndromes like sneezing or a runny nose naturally means that it is harder to spread the disease.

17 years have passed since officials of the mainland were widely denounced for withholding information during the 2003 SARS epidemic. Today, suspicions remain in the outside world about the release of information by the mainland. Some have questioned whether the Wuhan authorities had been aware of the outbreak long before they reported it on New Year's Eve. Others have suspected whether the mainland is hiding the number of cases and the real situation of the contagion.

Science requires both bold hypothesis and careful verification. A contagion is a matter of life or death. Any theory that falls short of accuracy may possibly mislead the direction of research or even result in public panic.

<https://news.mingpao.com/pns/%e8%8b%b1%e6%96%87/article/20200117/s00017/1579198721006/editorial-the-risk-of-limited-human-to-human-transmission>

<p>What: <i>(Hint: What is the main controversy and concepts of LS are mentioned in the news above?)</i></p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>When: <i>(Hint: In what time did the above news break out?)</i></p>	<hr/> <hr/>
<p>Where: <i>(Hint: In what place did the above news take place?)</i></p>	<hr/> <hr/>
<p>Who: <i>(Hint: What kind of people are involved in the above news? Mention THREE.)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● _____ ● _____ ● _____
<p>Why: <i>(Hint: Why the character would have such action in this news?)</i></p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Reflection (30-50 words): <i>(Hint: What are your feelings/ opinions towards the news above? Any suggestion/ solutions to solve the problem or situation mentioned above?)</i></p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>