

How scientists are fighting the novel coronavirus: A three minute guide

Research should also look to understand the best approach for infection prevention, including assessing whether lockdowns in major Chinese cities have had a positive or negative effect on slowing the spread of virus. Virologist Marie-Paule Kieny, who co-chaired the forum, said that there were four vaccine candidates in development. In around three months, she suggested, one or two of those might be in human trials. Still, it will be more than a year until they might be available for wider use. Officials called for research on how to control and counter misinformation that has spread since the start of the outbreak. Finally, Tedros encouraged research into preventing the transmission of zoonotic diseases — which originate in animals — to stem future outbreaks of this type.

Although researchers are already investigating some of these questions, and many others, WHO officials hope that its research blueprint will help to direct donor funding to the most productive avenues.

11 February 15:25 GMT — Coronavirus disease officially named COVID-19

The World Health Organization has [officially named](#) the disease caused by the coronavirus COVID-19. This will replace various monikers and hashtags given to the emerging illness over the past few weeks. Most recently, on 8 February, China's National Health Commission decided to temporarily call the disease novel coronavirus pneumonia, or NCP. But because viruses continue to spread from animals to people, this coronavirus won't be novel for long.

“COVID-19 stands for coronavirus disease in 2019,” said [Soumya Swaminathan](#), chief scientist at the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland, at a press briefing. She explained that there are many coronaviruses, and this style of naming will provide a format for referring to new coronavirus diseases in future years. “The virus itself is named by an international group of virologists who will look into the taxonomy,” she said. “But it is important to have a name for this disease that everybody uses.”

Two other diseases caused by coronaviruses were given names describing the clinical manifestations: SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) and MERS (Middle East respiratory syndrome).

Shortly after the WHO announced the disease's official name, the virus causing it was named SARS-CoV-2 by the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses. In a [paper](#) posted to the bioRxiv preprint server, the committee's study group on

coronaviruses explains that this term highlights the new virus' similarity to the SARS virus identified in 2003.