

comorbidities), it may progress to pneumonia, acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) and multi organ dysfunction. Many people are asymptomatic. The case fatality rate is estimated to range from 2 to 3%. Diagnosis is by demonstration of the virus in respiratory secretions by special molecular tests. Common laboratory findings include normal/low white cell counts with elevated C-reactive protein (CRP). The computerized tomographic chest scan is usually abnormal even in those with no symptoms or mild disease. Treatment is essentially supportive; role of antiviral agents is yet to be established. Prevention entails home isolation of suspected cases and those with mild illnesses and strict infection control measures at hospitals that include contact and droplet precautions. The virus spreads faster than its two ancestors the SARS-CoV