respiratory syncytial virus, rhinovirus, human metapneumovirus and SARS coronavirus. It is advisable to distinguish COVID-19 from other pneumonias such as mycoplasma pneumonia, chlamydia pneumonia and bacterial pneumonia.[33] Several published pieces of literature based on the novel coronavirus reported in China declared that stool and blood samples can also be collected from the suspected persons in order to detect the virus. However, respiratory samples show better viability in identifying the virus, in comparison with the other specimens.[34-36]

6.2 Nucleic acid amplification tests (NAAT) for COVID-19 virus

The gold standard method of confirming the suspected cases of COVID-19 is carried out by detecting the unique sequences of virus RNA through reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) along with nucleic acid sequencing if needed. The various genes of virus identified so far include N, E, S (N: nucleocapsid protein, E: envelope protein gene, S: spike protein gene) and RdRp genes (RNA-dependent RNA polymerase gene).[32]