

BBC 4 News at six - coronavirus in China

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Chinese authorities have confirmed that a new virus spreading across the country can be passed from person to person. The disease has infected more than two hundred people and three have died since it was first discovered in the central city of Wuhan last month. Cases have now been reported in Bei Jing and several other major coastal cities and provinces. Our medical correspondent Fergus Walsh reports.

Fergus Walsh:

It's official. Chinese mysterious virus can pass from person to person. Almost all of the cases so far have been the result of close contact with animals. The source is thought to be a seafood market in the city of Wu Han where the outbreak is centered. But Chinese National Health Commission has confirmed there has been a small number of cases of human to human transmission, some medical staff are said to have been infected. Health authorities in China are urging the public not to panic as hundreds of millions prepare to travel to celebrate the lunar new year. It's inevitable that this will lead to a further upsurge in cases.

The infection is caused by a coronavirus and causes respiratory problems, fever and cough. It's the height of the flu season meaning that it's hard to know initially what infection patients have. At train stations and airports in China, body temperature scanners are being used. Some airports in the United States, Singapore and Japan are screening travellers. Professor Jimmy Whitworth from the London School of hygiene and tropical medicine says that may eventually need to happen here.

Professor Jimmy Whitworth: 'The UK authorities need to start thinking about introducing some screening for passengers who are coming from China. The most obvious thing to do would be to institute some sort of formal screening so that we identify people who've got fever. But that could be supplemented with some questionnaires.'

This will revive painful memories of SARS also caused by a coronavirus which killed nearly eight hundred people worldwide almost two decades ago. That outbreak, initially covered up by China, was eventually brought under control by isolating patients and through international cooperation. Global health officials say China has learnt from past mistakes but it may be weeks or months yet before we know how big a threat this new virus poses.

Vocab

a virus

a coronavirus

a disease

to infect

to contract

a case

the flu

respiratory problems

cough

to cough

fever

feverish

to have fever

to have a temperature

to spread, spread, spread

a surge

an upsurge

hygiene

tropical medicine

to screen

SARS

to cover up

to bring under control

to isolate

health

health authorities

to threaten

to pose a threat

Grammar

Perfect, passive, will, can, may, need

Traduction de "on dit que", "selon les informations disponibles"

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have confirmed, has infected: [HAVE + EN], present perfect utilisé pour présenter les nouvelles (constat présent)

have died since...: [HAVE + EN], idem + période allant jusqu'au moment présent

since it was first discovered: [ED] + [BE + EN] : passif, au passé : depuis qu'il a été découvert = depuis le moment où il a été découvert, depuis sa découverte

have now been reported: [HAVE + EN] + [BE + EN] : présent perfect + passif : on rapporte que...

Fergus Walsh:

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