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A Newsletter for Journalists about COVID - 19 Pandemic

COVID-19



► What is Coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, which may cause illness for animals and humans. It's known that several coronaviruses causing respiratory infections, ranging from the usual cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The most recently discovered coronavirus causes coronavirus disease COVID-19.

► What is COVID - 19?

COVID - 19 is an infectious disease caused by the recently discovered coronavirus. This new virus and disease were unknown before the spread began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. COVID-19 is now a pandemic affecting many countries globally.



References:

-World Health Organization
-International Journalists Network

► What are the symptoms of COVID- 19?

The most common symptoms of COVID - 19 are fever, dry cough, and tiredness. Other symptoms that are less common and may affect some patients include aches and pains, nasal congestion, headache, conjunctivitis, sore throat, diarrhea, loss of taste or smell, or a rash on skin or discoloration of fingers or toes. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually. Some people become infected but only have very mild symptoms.

Most people (about %80) recover from the disease without need hospital treatment. Around 1 out of 5 infected people who get COVID- 19 becomes seriously ill and develops difficulty breathing. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like hypertension, heart and lung diseases, diabetes, or cancer, are at high risk of developing serious illness. However, anyone could be infected with COVID- 19 and become seriously ill. People of all ages who experience fever and/or cough associated with difficulty breathing/shortness of breath, chest pain/pressure, or loss of speech or movement should request medical care immediately regardless of what their ages are. If possible, it is recommended to call the health care provider or facility first, so the patient can be directed to the right clinic.



► How does COVID - 19 spread?

To date, the World Health Organization (WHO) is assessing ongoing researches on how COVID- 19 is spread. The following is a summary of what WHO figured out so far:

- Direct transmission through droplets from infected people while coughing or sneezing.
- Indirect transmission by touching surfaces such as door and table handles, stairs handrails and contaminated tools, and then touching the mouth, nose, or eye.
- Direct contact with infected people with the virus.
- Eat foods without proper cooking, especially meat and eggs.
- Share personal gadgets with others.
- Unprotected contact with wild or pet animals.



► What is the difference between self-isolation, self-quarantine, and physical distancing?

- Quarantine means restricting activities or separating people who are not ill themselves but may have been exposed to COVID - 19. The goal is to prevent the spread of the disease at the time when people just develop symptoms.
- Isolation means separating people who are ill with symptoms of COVID - 19 and may be infectious to prevent the spread of the disease.

- Physical distancing means being physically apart. WHO recommends keeping at least -1meter distance from others. This is a general measure that everyone should take even if they are in a good health status and not infected with COVID- 19.

► Instructions for protection in the work environment:

- 1 Emphasizing on all employees the necessity to put on medical masks while they are in their offices.
- 2 Emphasis on having the recommended social physical distances (1.5m - 2m) between employees' offices or in meetings.
- 3 Orient the employees on the importance to obey coughing and sneezing healthy protocols; covering the nose and mouth with paper tissues that are disposed of directly, and avoiding handshaking with hands.
- 4 Emphasizing the necessity of washing hands with soap and water or using alcoholic sanitizers regularly during the day.
- 5 Ensure that others' personal tools are not used, such as: pens, computers, notebooks, etc.
- 6 Reducing meeting periods and taking appropriate breaks that ensure ventilation and air regeneration.
- 7 Emphasizing the employees who have immunological weakness, to conduct necessary medical examinations periodically and take the utmost care and caution, and work from home in case they come to offices might put their health status at risk.

► Instructions to journalists for protection in the field:

- 1 Ensure that personal safety equipment is affordable before going to the field, such as medical masks, hand sanitizers, and protective suits.
- 2 Sterilization of tools and equipment after completion of photography and before returning it back to the office or car.
- 3 Maintain necessary social physical distancing and avoid being very close to other colleagues during media coverage.
- 4 Reduce the number of crew members, and time working in the field.
- 5 Move during working in the field individually.
- 6 Ensure that necessary permits for work and movement are taken, such as ID and press cards, and comply with the instructions of the competent authorities.

► Instructions to journalists in the editing room:

- 1 Do not rush to share news and exclusively from official sources.
- 2 Avoid the dramatic wording of writing headlines and news.
- 3 Maintaining the privacy of the infected people and their families when reporting the news.
- 4 Avoid stigmatize certain geographical areas or social groups as a source of the infection.
- 5 Ensure that you give full information while drafting the news.
- 6 Always keep mentioning safety and protection instructions in the media materials being published.
- 7 Addressing issues from new aspects may attract the attention of officials and the public during media coverage.