

Press Release

Mainland and HKSAR Medical Experts meet in HK Establishing Collaborations On Atypical Pneumonia

The Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC) and the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Hong Kong (HKU) invited medical professionals and scientists from Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the University of Hong Kong to join an Expert Panel Discussion on Atypical Pneumonia today (Saturday, April 26, 2003).

The objectives of the Expert Panel Discussion are to advocate collaborations between medical professionals and scientists in the Region and to keep them up-to-date of the latest development of the disease. Attached please find the list of Chairmen of the Expert Panel.

At the Expert Panel Discussion, Chairmen of the Epidemiology Session made the remarks, “What is the criteria to define that HK’s Atypical Pneumonia outbreak is over – 5, 10 or 15 cases per day? Should it be clinical or virological criteria? When will WHO withdraw the travel warning on HK?”

Chairmen of the Clinical Management Session made the remarks that at present, HK would continue to use steroids and Ribavirin as the first line treatment for Atypical Pneumonia patients. For those patients not responding, HA would advocate proper control study for using other treatments including Immunoglobulin M.

“The Coronavirus is regarded as the etiological agent of this new Atypical Pneumonia. However, co-infection with other pathogens might contribute to increased severity of the disease,” remarked by Chairmen of the Virology and Pathogenesis Session.

Lastly Chairman of the Infection Control Session raised the query why healthcare workers would still come down with the disease. The Chairmen also raised several precautionary measures to help contain the outbreak in the community.

At the press conference after the Expert Panel Discussion today (Saturday, April 26, 2003), Professor SK Lam, Dean of Medicine, The University of Hong Kong said, “The battle against Atypical Pneumonia requires the effort of all people regardless of classes, geographical regions and races. Hong Kong is in the best position to act as the center to the study of emerging infectious diseases because of its strategic geographical location and frequent traffic to and from different parts of the world. Not only should we devote every effort to controlling emerging diseases locally, we should demonstrate our ability to collaborate with medical professionals and scientists in the Region.”

“The Expert Panel Discussion on “Atypical Pneumonia” provides a platform for collaboration and exchange of ideas and information among experts in the Region which is instrumental in confronting any similar outbreak in future. We are most pleased to have such a valuable opportunity to meet expert from Hong Kong and other cities. More active collaborations and exchange of information and data will be expected after today’s Discussion,” said Mr Yang Weizhong, Director of the Office of Disease Control and Emergence Response of the China CDC.

Members of the Expert Panel are invited to speak at a **Joint Symposium on Atypical Pneumonia** tomorrow (April 27, 2003). The press is cordially invited to the Joint Symposium. Details are as follows:

Joint Symposium on Atypical Pneumonia

Date: Sunday, April 27, 2003

Time: 9:00 am – 5:30 pm

(Attached please find the programme of the Symposium)

Venue: Cheung Kung Hai Conference Centre, G/F, Academic & Administration Block, Faculty of Medicine Building, The University of Hong Kong, 21 Sassoon Road, Pokfulam, Hong Kong

*A shuttle bus will be arranged to pick up the press from Admiralty. Members of the press please wait at the bus stop near Café de Coral at Admiralty Centre (Exit A of Admiralty MTR Station). The bus will leave at **8:30 am sharp**.*

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mr Lennon Tsang of the Faculty of Medicine, the University of Hong Kong at (852) 2819-2857 or (852) 9042-6733.

April 26, 2003