



SARS Death Rates Higher Than Expected

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In April 2003, actual SARS coronaviruses under electron microscope © 2003 by Erasmus Medical Centre Department of Virology, Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

May 9, 2003 Geneva, Switzerland - The World Health Organization announced yesterday that the death rate is higher than originally calculated. After two intense months, as of May 8th, the SARS cases now total more than 7,000 with 506 deaths in 33 countries. The epidemic is still most severe in China where the rural provinces around Beijing are reporting a rapid increase in SARS cases.

The global average death rate is now broken down by age groups:

- 50% for patients 65 or older;
- 15% for people 45 to 64;
- 6% for patients 25 to 44;
- and below 1% for patients 24 or younger.

For comparison, the death rate from influenza viruses is 2%.

Further, a *Lancet* medical study based on data learned the past few months indicates that so far the SARS coronavirus samples collected from patients do *not* show mutation and are remarkably stable. This suggests something that Dr. Mark Jackwood at the University of Georgia said about coronaviruses being so species-specific that he doubted this new one had jumped from animal to human. See: **Earthfiles 05-02-03**. Dr. Jackwood said he thought it was more likely the new SARS coronavirus has been in the human population in a more benign form for a long time without being detected. Then it mutated to the more virulent SARS already adapted in the human system to infect and spread in the human population.

The *Lancet* study says the stability of the SARS coronavirus so far means that a successful vaccine might be developed. But it also means the virus is not mutating to a more benign form and SARS might persist as the first new and dangerous disease of the 21st Century.

SARS Cases as of May 9, 2003 Reported by CDC and
W.H.O.

United States

Suspected SARS pneumonia cases in the United States have climbed to 328 in 38 states with 63 probable cases; no deaths.

Alabama	1
Arizona	1
Arkansas	1
California	64
Colorado	11
Connecticut	8
Florida	18
Georgia	7
Hawaii	6
Illinois	16
Indiana	1
Kansas	3
Kentucky	4
Maine	2
Maryland	4
Massachusetts	19
Michigan	3
Minnesota	10
Mississippi	2
Missouri	2
Nevada	4
New Hampshire	1
New Jersey	4
New Mexico	1
New York	38
North Carolina	8
Ohio	13
Oregon	1
Pennsylvania	12
Rhode Island	2
South Carolina	2
South Dakota	1
Texas	7
Utah	7
Vermont	2
Virginia	9
Washington	24
Wisconsin	9

Worldwide:

May 9, 2003 - Current World Total: 7053 Cases, 34 countries, and 506 Deaths

Australia	4
Brazil	2
Bulgaria	1
Canada	146 cases, 22 deaths
China	4698 cases, 224 deaths
China, Hong Kong	1661 cases, 208 deaths
China, Macao	1
China, Taiwan,	131 cases, 13 deaths
Colombia	1
Finland	1
France,	6
Germany	8

India 1
Indonesia 2
Italy 9
Japan 2
Korea 1
Kuwait 1
Malaysia 7 cases, 2 deaths
Mongolia 9
New Zealand 1
Philippines 10 cases, 2 death
Poland 1
Ireland 1
Romania 1
Singapore 204 cases, 27 deaths
South Africa 1, 1 death
Spain 1
Sweden 3
Switzerland, 1
Thailand 7 cases, 2 deaths
United Kingdom 6
United States 63 probable; 328 suspect
Viet Nam 63 cases, 5 deaths

More Information:

CDC Recommendations for Travelers:

- Wash hands frequently and use alcohol-based rubs.
- Avoid crowds.
- Wear surgical mask #95 if in close contact with people who have respiratory symptoms such as coughing or shortness of breath.
- Avoid sharing eating utensils, towels and bedding.
- Do not touch toilets and sinks that have been soiled by body fluids.
- When you return from an infected area, for 10 days SARS symptoms could emerge.

SARS Symptoms:

- Fever above 101.4 degrees F. that "feels like the thermostat is too high and I can't escape."
 - Painful, achy body.
 - Nausea, possibly diarrhea.
 - Dry cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing.
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Websites:

<http://www.who.int/en/> (World Health Organization)

<http://www.cdc.gov/> (Centers for Disease Control)

<http://www.bcgsc.ca/bioinfo/SARS/> (BCGenome Sciences Centre)

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