

CHP provides update on investigation into case 12258

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (October 11) said that it is proactively conducting epidemiological investigation into a confirmed case that carried the L452R mutant strain and belonged to the Delta variant (case 12258, announced on October 8). Among environmental samples collected from the workplace of the patient yesterday (October 10), one sample taken from the handle of a microwave oven in the staff common room tested positive by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) of the CHP today with a very low viral load. The CHP considered that it is likely to be the result of contamination by the patient. The CHP has advised the relevant company to close the staff common room and to conduct thorough disinfection again today, and the CHP will conduct environmental sampling afterwards to ensure thorough disinfection.

As a precautionary measure, staff who have contact with the microwave oven concerned will be put under compulsory quarantine. Meanwhile, quarantine of all close contacts and related household contacts of the patient has been arranged. So far, no related preliminary or confirmed cases have been detected.

The CHP has also conducted genetic analysis on the sample of case 12258. The PHLSB of the CHP compared its available genomes of previous cases confirmed in Hong Kong with that of case 12258 and the result shows that the genetic sequence of case 12258 is different from these cases. The PHLSB has also compared the sequences with the sequences available in the online genome database GISAID. No genetic sequences from overseas countries uploaded to GISAID were found to match this case, but the sequence of case 12258 was relatively closer to cases reported in Europe, Korea and the US.

The CHP's investigation into the case is ongoing.