

LCQ22: Statistics and dissemination of information on epidemic

Following is a question by the Hon Chung Kwok-pan and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Food and Health, Dr Chui Tak-yi, in the Legislative Council today (November 4):

Question:

The Centre for Health Protection has, to date, recorded over 5 000 as well as over 100 confirmed and fatal cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) respectively. Regarding the statistics and dissemination of information on the epidemic, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of a breakdown of the total number of confirmed cases to date by the age group to which the patients belonged; the respective age groups with the highest recovery rate and highest mortality rate;

(2) as the findings of overseas medical studies have reportedly shown that obese people and elderly persons, upon contracting COVID-19, have a comparatively higher incidence of hospitalisation, developing severe symptoms and death (e.g. the mortality rate of patients aged above 65 is more than 90 times of those aged 18 to 29), whether the authorities have conducted similar statistical analyses on the local confirmed cases; if so, of the details; and

(3) as some medical experts have pointed out that there may be a new wave of the epidemic outbreak in the winter, whether the authorities will consider providing the public with more information relating to the epidemic, such as the correlation between age and health condition and the morbidity and mortality rates, so that members of the public (in particular those belonging to high-risk groups) can take precautionary measures early?

Reply:

President,

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the Government has been closely monitoring the development of the epidemic situation. Guided by the three key principles of responding promptly, staying alert to the situation and working in an open and transparent manner, and having regard to experts' advice, we have implemented decisive and appropriate measures to safeguard the public's health.

In consultation with the Hospital Authority (HA), my reply to the various parts of the question raised by the Hon Chung Kwok-pan is as follows:

(1) As at November 1, 2020, 5 331 confirmed cases of COVID-19 were reported in Hong Kong. The relevant number of confirmed cases, death cases and

discharged cases respectively broken down by the age group to which the patients belonged to are set out in the table below. In view that the epidemic is still ongoing, the calculation of death rate and recovery rate may lead to bias in the analysis. Thus, the relevant figures cannot be provided.

Type of cases	Age groups										
	0 to 9	10 to 19	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 69	70 to 79	80 to 89	90 to 99	100 to 109
Confirmed cases (see Note 1 and 2)	214	383	869	890	811	847	785	322	153	56	1
Death cases	0	0	0	1	0	2	13	27	42	20	0
Discharged cases	210	376	856	864	796	835	752	272	105	35	1

Note 1: Including 1 probable case.

Note 2: 31 cases were not admitted to hospital, and one of them was a death case.

(2) Among the studies on COVID-19 supported by the Health and Medical Research Fund administered by the Food and Health Bureau, there are two projects titled "Nowcasting COVID-19 transmission dynamics, severity, and the effectiveness of control measures" and "Comprehensive clinical, virological, microbiological, immunological and laboratory monitoring of patients hospitalised with Coronavirus Diseases (COVID-19)" which estimate the fatality risk of different age groups and investigate the association among virus shedding, host factors, and clinical outcomes. The two projects will last for one year.

Among the studies, the project "Nowcasting COVID-19 transmission dynamics, severity, and the effectiveness of control measures" provides online a real-time snapshot on the age distribution of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Hong Kong (<https://covid19.sph.hku.hk/>). With respect to reported cases, so far over half of the cases were found in individuals from 20 to 59 years old, followed by elders of 60 years old or above with fewer cases found in young adults aged below 20 and children.

Moreover, the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) has launched the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html). It publishes daily on the thematic website the latest information related to COVID-19, including the number of confirmed cases, date of onset, case classification, etc.

(3) To enable members of the public to be well-informed about the development

of the epidemic and get themselves prepared to fight the virus, the Government has launched the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" as a one-stop platform to integrate the latest information on COVID-19, as well as set up an Interactive Map Dashboard (<https://chp-dashboard.geodata.gov.hk/covid-19/en.html>) to consolidate information on the epidemic. Furthermore, the CHP and HA have been announcing the daily number of cases fulfilling the reporting criteria since January, and making regular reports to the public on the latest local epidemic situation via press conferences.

The CHP has issued guidelines reminding members of the public to observe good personal and environmental hygiene and disseminated health messages to them on preventing communicable diseases, social distancing, early testing and adapting to the new normal, etc. through various channels, including Announcements in the Public Interest on both television and radio stations, Facebook page, Instagram platform, YouTube channel and newspapers, etc. The CHP has also produced various health education materials for distribution in the community and maintained close liaison with different stakeholders.

Furthermore, to enable ethnic minorities (EM) to keep abreast of the health information announced by the Government, the main content of the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" has been translated into different languages, including Hindi, Nepali, Urdu, Thai, Bahasa Indonesia, Tagalog, Sinhala, Bengali and Vietnamese. The CHP also promotes health messages to EM through EM groups and relevant organisations and religious groups, and provides health education materials on anti-epidemic measures to EM organisations for publication of newsletters and dissemination of information.