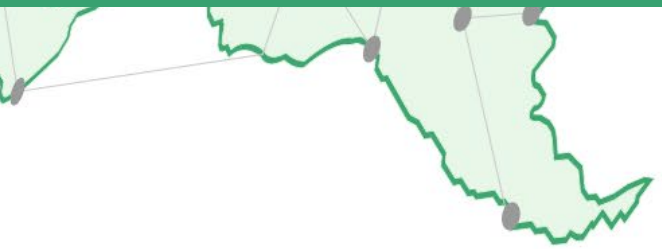
COVID-19: The Authoritative Chronology, December 2019–March 2020

Background paper 2a
The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response
May 2021



The Independent Panel FOR PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE

Glossary and abbreviations

AFCOR—Africa Task Force for Novel Coronavirus

AFR—WHO African Region

AMR—WHO Region of the Americas

AP—Associated Press

Article 6—International Health Regulations section regarding Member State notifications to the World Health Organization about a potential international health threat

Article 10—International Health Regulations section regarding Member State verification of emerging disease threat information

AU—African Union

CCDC—Chinese Center for Disease Control

COVID-19—the disease caused by SARS-CoV-2

DG—WHO Director-General

Dispersion factor k—describes how a disease clusters

EB—WHO Executive Board

ECDC—European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

ED—Executive Director

EEA—European Economic Area

EMR— WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region

EU—European Union

EUR—WHO European Region

G7—Group of Seven

G20—Group of Twenty

GOARN—WHO Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network

HCWs—health care workers

h-to-h—human-to-human

HQ—headquarters

IASC—Inter-agency Standing Committee

IDVI—Infectious Disease Vulnerability Index

IFRC—International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

IHR—International Health Regulations

ILO—International Labour Organization

Mean serial interval—indicates the length of time between symptom onset of an initial case and any subsequent cases

nCoV—novel coronavirus

PCR—polymerase chain reaction

R&D—research and development

PHEIC—Public Health Emergency of International Concern

PPE—personal protective equipment

ProMED—Program for Monitoring Emerging Diseases

PUO—pneumonia of unknown origin

R0—R naught, basic reproduction number, estimates how many other cases one infected individual is likely to cause prior to institution of public health measures or development of immunity

Rt and Re—R at time t, effective reproduction number, estimates how many other cases one infected individual is likely to cause at a specific time, considering immunity and public health measures

RaTG13—a type of bat coronavirus

RCCE—Risk Communication and Community Engagement

SARS—severe acute respiratory syndrome

SARS-CoV-2—severe acute respiratory syndrome-coronavirus-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 disease

SCMP—South China Morning Post

SEAR—WHO South-East Asian Region

STAG-IH—WHO Strategic and Technical Advisory Group for Infectious Hazards

UN—United Nations

UNHCR—UN High Commissioner for Refugees

UK—United Kingdom

US—United States

US CDC—United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

WASH—Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

WHO—World Health Organization

WPRO—WHO Western Pacific Regional Office

2019-nCoV—novel coronavirus 2019

CHRONOLOGY LEGEND

SUB-CATEGORY

Headline

Author/Actor
Published: <<Date>>

Caption

Source
Links to other sources e.g. news release

Time zones

CST – China Standard Time

CET – Central European Time

International actions

Country actions

Real-time evidence

Retrospective evidence

Annotations

Key events

Private document

Public document

WHO action

Strength of research

1 - low quality pre-print

2 - medium peer reviewed

3 - high quality top tier journal

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

pre-Dec 2019

SCIENCE

Assumed spillover from animals to humans

van Dorp L, Acman M, et al.
Published: 5 May 2020

Analysis of genomic diversity over time found that all sequences share a common ancestor towards the end of 2019, suggesting this as the period when SARS-CoV-2 spilled over to a human host.

Infection, Genetics and Evolution, *Nature*, *WHO-convened Global Study of the Origins of SARS-CoV-2*

01 Dec 2019

CASES

Patient with COVID-like symptoms identified

Huang C, Wang Y, et al.
Published: 24 Jan 2020

62-year-old man developed symptoms of a respiratory illness on this date. He was identified by some as the first patient with eventual laboratory confirmed COVID-19. Subsequent evidence suggests he was infected later in December.

The Lancet, *WHO*, *WHO-convened Global Study of the Origins of SARS-CoV-2*

08 Dec 2019

CASES

First identified COVID-19 patient becomes ill

Joint WHO-China mission
Published: 30 Mar 2021

"The case with the earliest onset date reported to the Chinese National Notifiable Disease Reporting System became ill on December 8".

WHO-convened Global Study of the Origins of SARS CoV-2

15 Dec 2019

SCIENCE

R0 increased during Dec. 2019

Lai A, Bergna A, et al.
Published: 25 Feb 2020

The analysis of 52 viral genomes from different countries determined that R0 increased from 0.8 to 2.4 during Dec. 2019, with a mean doubling time of around 4 days.

Journal of Medical Virology

mid-Dec 2019

SCIENCE

SARS-CoV-2 could have infected people in the US in mid-Dec

Basavaraju S, Patton M, et al.
Published: 30 Nov 2020

Blood samples in the United States (US) were found to have cross-reactive antibodies to SARS-CoV-2, suggesting that the virus could have infected people there as early as Dec. 2019.

Clinical Infectious Diseases, *Wall Street Journal*

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

16 Dec 2019

16 Dec 2019–02 Jan 2020

CASES

Patients with PUO admitted to Wuhan hospital (later confirmed as SARS-CoV-2)

Huang C, Wang Y, et al.
Published: 24 Jan 2020

41 patients with pneumonia of unknown origin (PUO) were admitted to a Wuhan hospital between 16 Dec.-2 Jan. Confirmed as SARS-CoV-2 in Jan. 2020.

The Lancet

18 Dec 2019

SCIENCE

Sewage samples in Italy possibly positive for SARS-CoV-2

La Rosa G, Mancini P, et al.
Published: 15 Aug 2020

Sewage samples from 18 Dec. in Milan and Turin were found to be positive for SARS-CoV-2, but may be false positives.

Science of the Total Environment

21 Dec 2019

21 Dec–30 Dec 2019

CASES

Three patients with PUO identified in Wuhan (later confirmed as SARS-CoV-2)

Zhu N, Zhang D, et al.
Published: 24 Jan 2020

Three patients with PUO were identified in Wuhan from 21 Dec. onwards. Lung fluid samples collected 30 Dec. during hospital admission later confirmed SARS-CoV-2. One patient was a retailer at the Huanan Seafood Market, another a frequent market visitor. One died 9 Jan. 2020, the others were discharged.

New England Journal of Medicine

24 Dec 2019

NEWS REPORT

Wuhan doctors sent lung fluid sample to commercial lab for testing

Published: 05 May 2020

Wuhan doctors noticed pneumonia patients were not responding to usual treatments and sent a test sample to Vision Medicals (commercial lab) for next generation sequencing/testing.

Chinese Medical Journal, *PBS Frontline*, *Caixin*

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

First reported suspected cluster

25 Dec 2019

26 Dec 2019

27 Dec 2019

ACTION

Suspicious cases admitted to Wuhan hospital

Dr. Zhang Jixian

One female with fever and dry cough symptoms is identified by Dr. Zhang Jixian in Hubei Hospital of Integrated Chinese and Western Medicine. Her husband is admitted to a different department of the hospital on the same day. The results of the diagnostic work-ups are different than normal pneumonia cases. The female reports close contact with the Huanan Seafood Market, while her husband reports no contact with the market.

Interview and correspondence with Dr. Zhang Jixian, Journal of Nuclear Medicine, WHO-convened Global Study of the Origins of SARS-CoV

ACTION

Additional suspicious cases identified at Wuhan hospital, cluster reported

Dr. Zhang Jixian

Staff at Hubei Hospital of Integrated Chinese and Western Medicine realize that the two cases are a couple, and transfer the husband to the same department as his wife. Their son, who is asymptomatic, is also CT scanned, which reveals that he has similar lung abnormalities as his parents. Dr. Zhang Jixian reports the three cases to the Jianghan District Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Interview and correspondence with Dr. Zhang Jixian, Journal of Nuclear Medicine, IHR Review Committee Report

ACTION

Wuhan CDC collects samples from PUO patients

Wuhan CDC

Wuhan CDC visits Hubei Hospital of Integrated Chinese and Western Medicine to collect lung fluid and blood samples from three PUO patients (husband, wife, son) for more investigation. Dr. Zhang Jixian reports to Wuhan CDC that she is "concerned about human-to-human (h-to-h) transmission." Dr. Zhang Jixian notes "Wuhan CDC didn't dismiss my thoughts nor did they confirm them, but said they needed to confirm through lab investigations."

Interview and correspondence with Dr. Zhang Jixian, Journal of Nuclear Medicine, IHR Review Committee Report

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

NEWS REPORT

Senior director at Wuhan hospital heard of possible spread

Published: 28 Jan 2020

Dr. Lu Xiaohong, head of gastroenterology at City Hospital No. 5, told China Youth Daily that on 25 Dec. she heard unexplained viral pneumonia was spreading among health care workers (HCWs).

China Youth Daily, NY Times

NEWS REPORT

Chinese lab identified SARS-like virus in samples

Published: 01 Feb 2020

An account published in multiple Chinese news sites by an anonymous lab technician, said his company had received samples from Wuhan and determined on 26 Dec. they contained a new coronavirus with 87% similarity to Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

Washington Post, Caixin

SCIENCE

Respiratory sample from hospitalised patient in France positive for SARS-CoV-2

Deslandes A, Berti V, et al.
Published: 03 May 2020

A hospital in the north of Paris retrospectively tested respiratory samples from patients admitted to the intensive care unit with influenza-like illness in Dec. 2019. The sample from a patient admitted on 27 Dec. was found to be positive for SARS-CoV-2.

International Journal of Antimicrobial Agents, Reuters

NEWS REPORT

Private lab in China pieced most of genome

Published: 26 Feb 2020

Private lab shared next generation sequence data of potential new virus with homology to SARS-like coronavirus with Wuhan officials and the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences. First reported by Chinese finance publication Caixin; independently confirmed by the Associated Press (AP).

Caixin, Associated Press

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

30 Dec 2019 – 15:10 CST/08:10 CET

ALERT

Wuhan issues a first "urgent notice" to health institutions

Wuhan Municipal Health Commission

The Wuhan Municipal Health Commission issues an "urgent notice" to health institutions about cases of PUO linked to the Huanan Seafood Market. The notice is shared in online chat groups, including by ophthalmologist Dr. Li.

Wuhan Municipal Health Commission archived document, WHO internal documents, Associated Press, PBS Frontline

SCIENCE

Private laboratory sequences genome of novel coronavirus

Vision Medicals

Scientists at private lab report genome sequencing results as "highly suspicious of SARS". This is shared with the hospital that sent the samples.

Pre-print

18:50 CST/11:50 CET

ALERT

Wuhan issues a second "urgent notice" to health institutions

Wuhan Municipal Health Commission

The Wuhan Municipal Health Commission issues a second notice to health institutions, with instructions not to disclose information to the public without authorisation. The "urgent notice" includes the following three headings: Strengthening Responsibility and Guidance, Regularizing Medical Care, and Strict Reporting Information System.

Wuhan Municipal Health Commission archived document, WHO internal documents, The Guardian, Associated Press

ACTION

Wuhan Institute of Virology receives PUO samples

Wuhan Institute of Virology

Wuhan Institute of Virology receives samples from seven patients with PUO. The samples are sent by staff at Wuhan Jinyintan Hospital.

Interview and correspondence with Dr. Zhengli Shi , Nature

30 Dec 2019

31 Dec 2019 – 10:16 CST/03:16 CET

NEWS REPORT

First report of cases in Chinese media

Published: 31 Dec 2019

Finance Sina publishes the first report in Chinese media on cases of PUO in Wuhan. Other media articles are published shortly after in Beijing News, Central News Agency, Taiwan and South China Morning Post (SCMP).

Finance Sina, WHO internal documents

12:16 CST/05:16 CET

REQUEST

Taipei CDC IHR Point of Contact emails WHO via IHR

Taipei CDC IHR Point of Contact

Taipei CDC IHR Point of Contact emails WHO via the International Health Regulations (IHR) system and requests information about cases, referring to recent news reports. WHO Headquarters (HQ) acknowledges the request.

WHO internal documents, Taiwan Centers for Disease Control

31 Dec 2019

NEWS REPORT

China CDC visited Huanan Seafood Market

Published: 2 Nov 2020

China CDC visited Huanan Seafood Market and took samples before the market was closed.

NY Times

CASES

55% of cases linked to Huanan Seafood Market

Li Q, Guan X, et al.
Published: 29 Jan 2020

A study of the first laboratory confirmed patients in Wuhan with COVID-19 found a link to the Huanan Seafood market in 55 % of cases with onset of disease before 1 Jan.

New England Journal of Medicine

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

12:17 CST/05:17 CET

REQUEST

WHO China Country Office receives query from Beijing bureau of New York Times

WHO China Country Office

WHO China Country Office receives a query from the Beijing bureau of New York Times regarding cases in Wuhan.

WHO internal documents

12:59 CST/05:59 CET

ALERT

ProMED reports cases in Wuhan

ProMED

WHO HQ Epidemic Intelligence from Open Sources detects signals of outbreak on Program for Monitoring Emerging Diseases (ProMED).

ProMED, WHO staff interview, WHO internal documents, IHR Review Committee Report

13:38 CST/06:38 CET

CASES

Wuhan releases public bulletin about PUO cases

Wuhan Municipal Health Commission

27 cases of PUO are confirmed by Wuhan Municipal Health Commission in public bulletin.

State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China

13:55 CST/06:55 CET

ACTION

WHO China takes note of public bulletin and notifies WPRO

WHO China Country Office

WHO China Country Office sees online public bulletin from Wuhan Municipal Health Commission and immediately notifies the WHO WPRO IHR Focal Point by email, and specifies no IHR notification has been issued.

WHO staff interview, WHO internal documents

BORDER MEASURES

Taiwan (China) starts screening airline passengers

Taiwan (China)

Taiwan (China) starts screening airline passengers from Wuhan for fever.

Taiwan Today, JAMA

16:57 CST/09:57 CET

REQUEST

WHO HQ requests information from WHO WPRO IHR Focal Point

WHO HQ

Having detected ProMED signal, WHO HQ surveillance team requests more information from the WHO WPRO IHR Focal Point, who provides a machine translation of the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission public bulletin. On the same day, WHO receives requests for more information from the United Kingdom (UK) and the European Centre for Disease Control (ECDC).

WHO internal documents

BORDER MEASURES

Hong Kong SAR (China) makes public health announcement

Hong Kong SAR (China)

Hong Kong SAR (China) makes public health announcement related to cluster of PUO cases in Wuhan, and underscores thermal imaging systems are in place at borders to screen for possible cases.

Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

31 Dec 2019, cont.

INTERNATIONAL

01 Jan 2020 – 10:35 CST/03:35 CET

REQUEST

WHO WPRO IHR Focal Point requests information

WHO WPRO

WHO WPRO IHR Focal Point requests information about the cluster of cases from the Chinese National Focal Point, who acknowledges request one hour later. WHO WPRO IHR Focal Point sends a more detailed request for information shortly afterward.

WHO Timeline, WHO internal documents, IHR Review Committee Report

16:54 CST/09:54 CET

REQUEST

WHO Representative to China emails Chinese NHC

WHO Representative to China

WHO Representative to China emails the Chinese National Health Commssion to offer support and repeats the requests for information.

WHO internal documents

01 Jan – 23:05 CET
02 Jan – 06:05 CST

REQUEST

WHO HQ requests WHO WPRO to trigger Article 10 of IHR

WHO HQ

In an email, WHO HQ requests WHO WPRO to activate Article 10 of the IHR and issue a formal request for verification. The Incident Management System is activated and an Incident Management Support Team established.

WHO internal documents, WHO Timeline

10:45 CST/03:45 CET

REQUEST

WHO China Country Office contacts WPRO

WHO China Country Office

Replying to the email from WHO HQ, WHO Country Office repeats request to WPRO to follow up with the Chinese National Focal Point.

WHO internal documents

COUNTRY

13:05 CST/06:05 CET

REQUEST

Singapore National Focal Point contacts WHO WPRO

Singapore National Focal Point

The Singapore National Focal Point contacts WHO WPRO, requesting information about the cases in Wuhan. WHO WPRO replies four hours later.

WHO internal documents

ACTION

Huanan Seafood Market closed

Wuhan local health authority

The Huanan Seafood Market is closed, cleaned, and disinfected.

People's Daily, WHO

ACTION

Wuhan Institute of Virology sequences the virus

Wuhan Institute of Virology
Published: 29 Jan 2020

Using next-generation sequencing, Wuhan Institute of Virology decodes the sequence of the virus genome, except the 5' and 3' terminus. The Institute sequences the full genome by 7 Jan.

Interview and correspondence with Dr. Zhengli Shi, Wuhan Institute of Virology, Associated Press

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

NEWS REPORT

Media reports WHO is in contact with Chinese authorities

Published: 01 Jan 2020

South China Morning Post reports that "The World Health Organisation said it is in ongoing contact with authorities in China over an unidentified outbreak of viral pneumonia in the central city of Wuhan, amid concern it may have been transmitted from animals."

South China Morning Post

01 Jan 2020 — **02 Jan**

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

NEWS REPORT

Eight doctors questioned by Wuhan police

Published: 01 Feb 2020

The doctors questioned include ophthalmologist Li Wenliang, who had sent a private chat message to colleagues about a new SARS-like virus. The incidents were reported on the Chinese newscast "Xinwen Lianbo", watched by millions. The police followed up with a warning in the Xinhua News Agency and "call on all netizens to not fabricate rumors, not spread or believe rumors."

Washington Post, The Lancet

INTERNATIONAL

16:00 CST/09:00 CET

MEETING

First three-level teleconference

WHO Incident Manager Support Team

WHO Incident Manager Support Team holds its first three-level teleconference. In a context of increasing requests for information from several Member States, specifics of activating IHR to obtain further information from China are discussed.

WHO internal documents

21:00 CST/13:00 CET

MEETING

WHO and GOARN teleconference

WHO and GOARN

WHO and WHO Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN) hold a teleconference about the outbreak. China CDC does not join the call.

WHO internal documents, WHO Timeline

REQUEST

WHO Representative to China writes formal letter to China

WHO Representative to China

WHO Representative to China writes a letter to the National Health Commission, offering support and urging the Commission and the China IHR National Focal Point to respond urgently to requests for information.

WHO internal documents, WHO Timeline

03 Jan – 11:15 CST/04:15 CET

REQUEST

WHO WPRO contacts China, triggering Article 10 of IHR

WHO WPRO

WHO WPRO requests information from the Chinese National Focal Point under Article 10 of IHR. The Focal Point replies five hours later and confirms information issued by Wuhan Municipal Health Commission.

WHO internal documents, IHR Review Committee Interim Progress Report

16:00 CST/09:00 CET

MEETING

First technical briefing between China and WHO

WHO Country Office

First of three technical briefings between WHO China Country Office and the Chinese National Health Commission. China gives WHO information matching the public bulletin, issued one hour later. A WHO three-level teleconference is held immediately following the meeting.

WHO internal documents, WHO Timeline

COUNTRY

REQUEST

Countries ask WHO for information

Countries

Several Member States, including Malaysia and the Republic of Korea, request further information about the outbreak from WHO.

WHO internal documents

BORDER MEASURES

Hong Kong SAR (China) to add "mystery Wuhan pneumonia" to notifiable infectious diseases list

Hong Kong SAR (China)

Hong Kong SAR (China) announces that they will add "mystery Wuhan pneumonia" to a list of notifiable infectious diseases, allowing the authorities to place patients in quarantine.

South China Morning Post

BORDER MEASURES

Thailand implements screening of patients travelling from Wuhan

Government of Thailand

Thailand implements measures for screening patients travelling from Wuhan at four airports, and steps up surveillance at public and private hospitals.

Euro Surveillance, WHO

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

02 Jan, cont. — 03 Jan

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

SCIENCE

Sampling at Huanan Seafood Market showed the virus was present in the environment, not in animals

Joint WHO-China mission
Published: 31 Jul 2020

Of 336 samples collected from animals at Huanan Seafood Market, none was positive by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) for SARS-CoV-2. 69 out of 842 environmental samples were positive by PCR for SARS-CoV-2. Three genetic sequences of SARS-CoV-2 from environmental samples at Huanan Seafood Market eventually were published on the Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data.

WHO-Convened Global Study of the Origins of SARS-CoV-2

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

17:00 CST/10:00 CET

CASES

Wuhan issues second public bulletin confirming 44 PUO cases

Wuhan Municipal Health Commission

Wuhan Municipal Health Commission issues second public bulletin, confirming 44 PUO cases, of which 11 are severely ill and 33 are in stable condition.

WHO

04 Jan – 11:22 CST/04:22 CET

REQUEST

WHO WPRO requests more information; advises IHR state parties will be notified

WHO WPRO

WHO WPRO IHR Focal Point acknowledges the information received under Article 10 of IHR and requests more information from the Chinese National Focal Point. WHO WPRO advises that IHR state parties will be notified. The Focal Point replies one hour later.

WHO internal documents

13:27 CST/06:27 CET

ANNOUNCEMENT

WHO WPRO tweets China has reported a cluster of PUO cases

WHO WPRO

"#China has reported to WHO regarding a cluster of pneumonia cases in Wuhan, Hubei Province. The Govt has also met with our country office, and updated @ WHO on the situation. Govt actions to control the incident have been instituted and investigations into the cause are ongoing."

WHO WPRO Twitter

04 Jan – 19:13 CET
05 Jan – 02:13 CST

ANNOUNCEMENT

WHO HQ tweets China has reported a cluster of pneumonia cases

WHO HQ

"#China has reported to WHO a cluster of #pneumonia cases —with no deaths— in Wuhan, Hubei Province. Investigations are underway to identify the cause of this illness."

WHO Twitter

PUBLICATION

WHO reports 44 cases in Disease Outbreak News

WHO

Based on Chinese data, WHO reports the 44 cases identified by 3 Jan. in Disease Outbreak News, and states that there is "no evidence of significant human-to-human transmission".

WHO Disease Outbreak News

ANNOUNCEMENT

Wuhan issues third public bulletin confirming 59 PUO cases

Wuhan Municipal Health Commission
Published: 5 Jan 2020

Wuhan Municipal Health Commission issues a third bulletin, reporting 59 cases, seven in serious condition, no deaths. The bulletin reports that preliminary studies have not shown any sign of h-to-h transmission, and that no health care workers have been infected.

Wuhan Municipal Health Commission, Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy

01 Jan–09 Jan 2020

SCIENCE

Re estimated at 3.54 in China

Hao X, Chen S, et al.
Published: 16 Jul 2020

Re estimated at 3.54 (3.4–3.67) in China for the period 1 Jan.–9 Jan., suggesting rapid spread.

Nature

03 Jan, cont. — 04 Jan — 05 Jan

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

05 Jan, cont.

ALERT

WHO alerts Member States via IHR

WHO

WHO shares information about the cluster of cases through the IHR Event Information System accessible to all WHO Members States and advises countries to take precautions to reduce the risk of acute respiratory infections.

WHO Timeline, *IHR Review Committee Report*

SCIENCE

Wuhan Institute of Virology isolates virus

Wuhan Institute of Virology
Published: 29 Jan 2020

The Wuhan Institute of Virology confirmed the isolation of the novel coronavirus with immunofluroscence and quantitative PCR assays.

Interview and correspondence with Dr. Zhengli Shi, Wuhan Institute of Virology

SCIENCE

Shanghai group submit genome to GenBank

Zhang YZ, Wu F et al.
Published: 11 Jan 2020

A consortium of researchers from the Shanghai Public Health Center sequenced the novel coronavirus and uploaded the sequence to GenBank on 5 Jan. The submitted sequence was subsequently published on 11 Jan. and updated on 14 Jan. and 17 Jan.

GenBank submission, *Nature*

06 Jan

NEWS REPORT

China CDC raised emergency level

Published: 02 Jun 2020

China CDC raised emergency level to second highest. Staff isolated the virus, drafted lab testing guidelines, and designed test kits. The agency has no authority to issue public warnings.

Associated Press

NEWS REPORT

WHO was concerned that not enough data was shared

Published: 02 Jun 2020

"We're currently at the stage where they're giving it to us 15 minutes before it appears on CCTV (China Central Television)," said WHO Representative to China.

Associated Press

NEWS BRIEFING

WHO briefs UN journalists

WHO

WHO participates in a regular UN Geneva press briefing to give an update on the cluster of cases.

WHO internal documents

SCIENCE

China CDC isolates the virus

China CDC

The National Institute for Viral Disease Control and Prevention of the China CDC succeeds in isolating the first novel coronavirus strain.

Interview: Dr. George Gao 25 Nov. 20, *State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China*

07 Jan

NEWS REPORT

Chinese top leaders discussed the outbreak

Published: 09 Jun 2020

Chinese top leaders, including the President, discussed the outbreak at a meeting of the Politburo Standing Committee.

BBC

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

07 Jan, cont. — 08 Jan — 09 Jan

REQUEST

WHO requests detailed case information from China

WHO

WHO writes to the China IHR National Focal Point and requests urgent confirmation of the discovery of the novel coronavirus, and detailed information on its etiology, clinical presentation, additional laboratory findings, including sequencing, and the containment measures put in place.

WHO internal documents

NEWS REPORT

Chinese scientists identify new coronavirus

Published: 08 Jan 2020

Ahead of anyone, the Wall Street Journal reports that Chinese scientists investigating a mystery illness that has sickened dozens in central China have discovered a new strain of coronavirus.

Wall Street Journal

09–12 Jan 2020

INTERIM GUIDANCE

WHO issues a series of guidance tools

WHO HQ
Published: 9 Jan 2020

WHO issues a series of guidance tools related to national capacities (9 Jan.), disease commodities (9 Jan.), infection prevention and control (10 Jan.), laboratory testing (10 Jan.), risk communication and community engagement (10 Jan.), surveillance case definitions (11 Jan.), and clinical management (12 Jan.).

WHO guidance

CASES

Unobserved cases due to h-to-h transmission in China estimated to be 52,381

Mizumoto K, Kagaya K, and Chowell G.
Published: 2 Jun 2020

Unobserved cases due to human-to-human transmission were estimated to be 52,381 from 8 Dec. 2019 to 9 Jan. 2020. R0 estimated to 2.37.

International Journal of Infectious Disease

ANNOUNCEMENT

WHO announces China has identified new coronavirus

WHO China

"Chinese authorities have made a preliminary determination of a novel (or new) coronavirus, identified in a hospitalized person with pneumonia in Wuhan."

WHO Statement, *IHR Review Committee Report*

CASES

First death occurs

Wuhan Municipal Health Commission
Published: 11 Jan 2020

The first pandemic-related death occurred on 9 Jan. — a 61-year-old male with liver disease who frequented the Huanan Seafood Market. The immediate cause of death was respiratory and circulatory failure.

Wuhan Municipal Health Commission, *Bloomberg*

PUBLICATION

Risk for introduction to the EU considered low

ECDC
Published: 9 Jan 2020

Three EU airports have direct flights to Wuhan. As there is no indication of h-to-h transmission and no cases detected outside Wuhan, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) considers the likelihood of introduction to the European Union (EU) to be low, but it can't be excluded.

ECDC

NEWS REPORT

Mayor of Wuhan reported to the People's Congress of Wuhan

Published: 01 Feb 2020, updated 7 Feb 2020

In his address to the People's Congress of Wuhan, the Mayor of Wuhan focused on new infrastructure, didn't mention the outbreak.

NY Times

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

MEETING

WHO convenes global experts

WHO

WHO begins convening expert panels including clinicians and experts on diagnostics and laboratory guidance.

WHO internal documents, WHO Timeline

REQUEST

WHO requests PCR primer and genome sequence

The Executive Director of the WHO Health Emergencies Programme writes to China's National IHR Focal Point requesting China share the diagnostic PCR primer and full genome sequence.

IHR Review Committee Report

MEETING

First meeting of the STAG-IH

WHO STAG-IH

WHO Strategic and Technical Advisory Group for Infectious Hazards (STAG-IH) discusses the situation in Wuhan and provides a risk analysis. WHO convenes R&D experts as well.

WHO STAG-IH

BORDER MEASURES

Areas impose international travel screening and/or controls

Various countries

By 10 Jan., Hong Kong SAR (China), Japan, Macao SAR (China), Taiwan (China), Singapore, Turkmenistan, Viet Nam, Malaysia, and the Philippines all implement some border measures.

Our World in Data, Viet Nam, Malaysia, Philippines

ADVICE

WHO recommends no specific health measures for travellers

WHO HQ
Published: 10 Jan 2020

WHO publishes advice for international travel and trade, recommends caution while traveling in or from Wuhan. Advises against travel or trade restrictions on China based on currently available information.

WHO HQ

MEETING

GCM for R&D Preparedness and Scientific Advisory Group of the R&D Blueprint hold first teleconference

WHO

The Global Coordination Mechanism for R&D Preparedness and the Scientific Advisory Group of the R&D Blueprint hold their first teleconferences on the novel coronavirus.

GCM teleconference meeting minutes, WHO timeline

09 Jan, cont.

10 Jan

SCIENCE

R0 initially estimated at 2.2 in China

Li Q, Guan X, et al.
Published: 29 Jan 2020

Initial estimates of transmission dynamics in Wuhan indicated R0 to be 2.2 (1.4–3.9) and a doubling time of 7.4 days.

New England Journal of Medicine

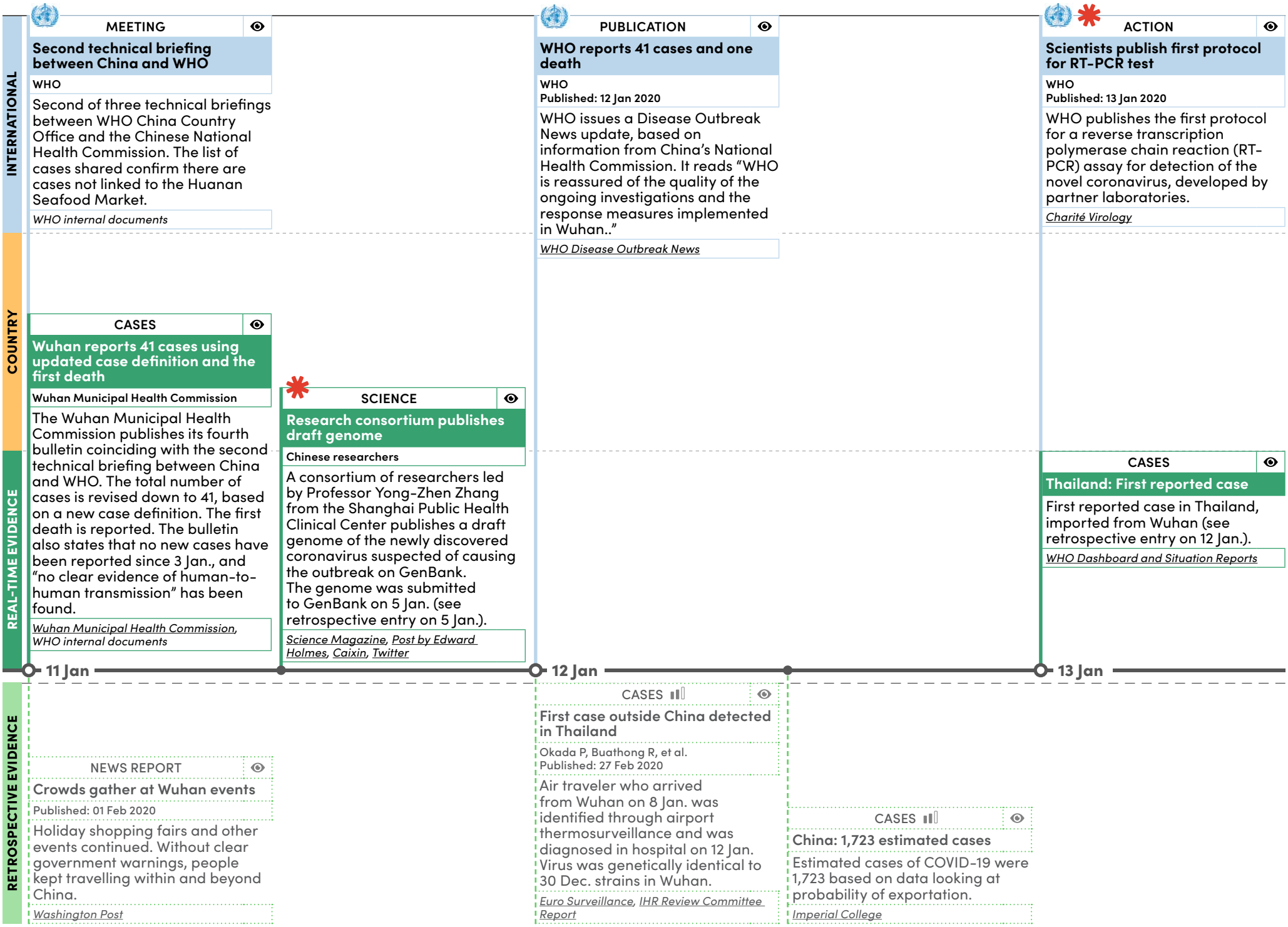
SCIENCE

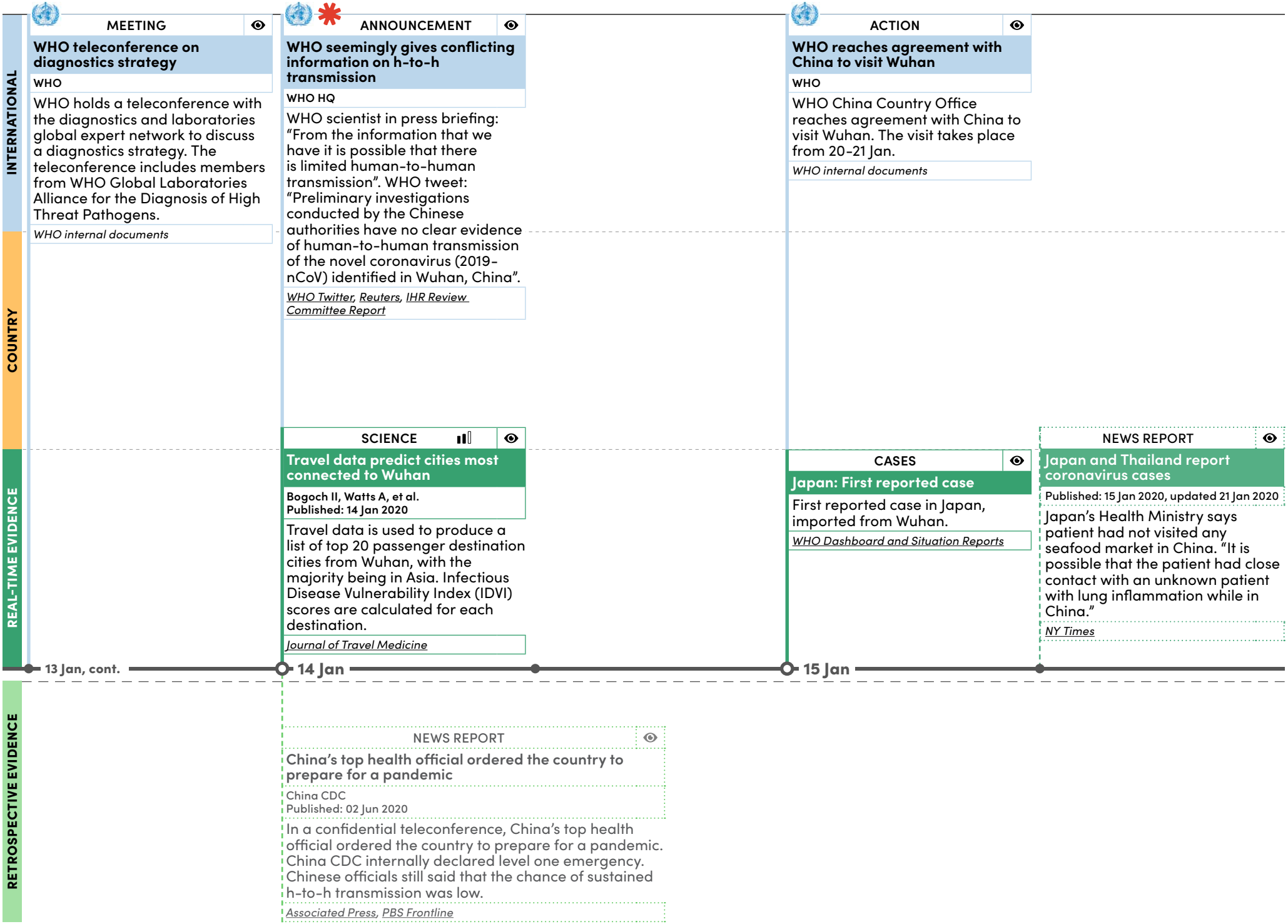
PCR diagnostic reagent developed and tested

China CDC
Published: 29 Jan 2020

PCR diagnostic reagent was developed and tested in China, allowing for accurate identification and diagnosis of SARS-CoV-2 infection. Reagent was distributed to Wuhan the next day.

New England Journal of Medicine, State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China


INTERNATIONAL
COUNTRY
REAL-TIME EVIDENCE
RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE
MEETING
Second technical briefing between China and WHO
WHO
Second of three technical briefings between WHO China Country Office and the Chinese National Health Commission. The list of cases shared confirm there are cases not linked to the Huanan Seafood Market.
WHO internal documents
PUBLICATION
WHO reports 41 cases and one death
WHO
Published: 12 Jan 2020
WHO issues a Disease Outbreak News update, based on information from China's National Health Commission. It reads "WHO is reassured of the quality of the ongoing investigations and the response measures implemented in Wuhan.."
WHO Disease Outbreak News
ACTION
Scientists publish first protocol for RT-PCR test
WHO
Published: 13 Jan 2020
WHO publishes the first protocol for a reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) assay for detection of the novel coronavirus, developed by partner laboratories.
Charité Virology
CASES
Wuhan reports 41 cases using updated case definition and the first death
Wuhan Municipal Health Commission
The Wuhan Municipal Health Commission publishes its fourth bulletin coinciding with the second technical briefing between China and WHO. The total number of cases is revised down to 41, based on a new case definition. The first death is reported. The bulletin also states that no new cases have been reported since 3 Jan., and "no clear evidence of human-to-human transmission" has been found.
Wuhan Municipal Health Commission, WHO internal documents
SCIENCE
Research consortium publishes draft genome
Chinese researchers
A consortium of researchers led by Professor Yong-Zhen Zhang from the Shanghai Public Health Clinical Center publishes a draft genome of the newly discovered coronavirus suspected of causing the outbreak on GenBank. The genome was submitted to GenBank on 5 Jan. (see retrospective entry on 5 Jan.).
Science Magazine, Post by Edward Holmes, Caixin, Twitter
CASES
Thailand: First reported case
First reported case in Thailand, imported from Wuhan (see retrospective entry on 12 Jan.).
WHO Dashboard and Situation Reports
11 Jan
12 Jan
13 Jan
NEWS REPORT
Crowds gather at Wuhan events
Published: 01 Feb 2020
Holiday shopping fairs and other events continued. Without clear government warnings, people kept travelling within and beyond China.
Washington Post
CASES
First case outside China detected in Thailand
Okada P, Buathong R, et al.
Published: 27 Feb 2020
Air traveler who arrived from Wuhan on 8 Jan. was identified through airport thermosurveillance and was diagnosed in hospital on 12 Jan. Virus was genetically identical to 30 Dec. strains in Wuhan.
Euro Surveillance, IHR Review Committee Report
CASES
China: 1,723 estimated cases
Estimated cases of COVID-19 were 1,723 based on data looking at probability of exportation.
Imperial College


INTERNATIONAL
COUNTRY
REAL-TIME EVIDENCE
RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE
MEETING
WHO teleconference on diagnostics strategy
WHO
WHO holds a teleconference with the diagnostics and laboratories global expert network to discuss a diagnostics strategy. The teleconference includes members from WHO Global Laboratories Alliance for the Diagnosis of High Threat Pathogens.
WHO internal documents
ANNOUNCEMENT
WHO seemingly gives conflicting information on h-to-h transmission
WHO HQ
WHO scientist in press briefing: "From the information that we have it is possible that there is limited human-to-human transmission". WHO tweet: "Preliminary investigations conducted by the Chinese authorities have no clear evidence of human-to-human transmission of the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) identified in Wuhan, China".
WHO Twitter, Reuters, IHR Review Committee Report
ACTION
WHO reaches agreement with China to visit Wuhan
WHO
WHO China Country Office reaches agreement with China to visit Wuhan. The visit takes place from 20-21 Jan.
WHO internal documents
SCIENCE
Travel data predict cities most connected to Wuhan
Bogoch II, Watts A, et al.
Published: 14 Jan 2020
Travel data is used to produce a list of top 20 passenger destination cities from Wuhan, with the majority being in Asia. Infectious Disease Vulnerability Index (IDVI) scores are calculated for each destination.
Journal of Travel Medicine
CASES
Japan: First reported case
First reported case in Japan, imported from Wuhan.
WHO Dashboard and Situation Reports
NEWS REPORT
Japan and Thailand report coronavirus cases
Published: 15 Jan 2020, updated 21 Jan 2020
Japan's Health Ministry says patient had not visited any seafood market in China. "It is possible that the patient had close contact with an unknown patient with lung inflammation while in China."
NY Times
NEWS REPORT
China's top health official ordered the country to prepare for a pandemic
China CDC
Published: 02 Jun 2020
In a confidential teleconference, China's top health official ordered the country to prepare for a pandemic. China CDC internally declared level one emergency. Chinese officials still said that the chance of sustained h-to-h transmission was low.
Associated Press, PBS Frontline
13 Jan, cont.
14 Jan
15 Jan

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

ALERT

PAHO issues Epidemiological Alert

PAHO

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) issues an Epidemiological Alert about the novel coronavirus recommending Member States ensure health workers have access to information, are familiar with principles and procedures, and trained to ask about patient travel history. Screening at entry points and restrictions on travel and trade are not recommended.

PAHO

MEETING

Third technical briefing between WHO and China

WHO

The third in-person technical briefing between WHO China Country Office and Chinese health authorities occurs. China National Health Commission provides the first "line list" of cases.

WHO internal documents

ANNOUNCEMENT

WHO WPRO: no clear evidence of h-to-h transmission

WHO WPRO
Published: 16 Jan 2020

WHO WPRO tweets that "According to the latest info we have, there is no clear evidence of sustained human-to-human transmission and there are no infections reported among health care workers."

WHO WPRO Twitter

CASES

First US COVID-19 patient seeks care

US CDC
Published: 21 Jan 2020

A man from Seattle seeking care for illness is later confirmed on 21 Jan. as the first US COVID-19 case.

US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

15 Jan, cont. — mid Jan — 16 Jan

CASES

Virus potentially circulated in Italy

Alteri C, Cento V, et al.
Published: 19 Jan 2021

Analysis of early Italy cases suggests the virus was already circulating in the community prior to first confirmed case, as early as mid-January.

Nature

SCIENCE

Rt estimated at 2.35 in China

Kucharski AJ, Russel TW, et al.
Published: 11 Mar 2020

Rt estimated at 2.35 in China one week before travel restrictions were put in place on 23 Jan. It fell to 1.05 one week later.

The Lancet Infectious Diseases

10 Jan–22 Jan 2020

SCIENCE

Re estimated at 3.32 in China

Hao X, Chen S, et al.
Published: 16 Jul 2020

Re estimated at 3.32 (3.19–3.44) in China for the period 10 Jan.–22 Jan.

Nature

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

17 Jan

MEETING

First meeting of analysis and modelling group

WHO

WHO holds the first meeting of the analysis and modelling working group for the novel coronavirus.

WHO internal documents, WHO timeline

NEWS REPORT

US reports it will screen passengers on Wuhan flights

The US will begin screening efforts at three US airports to detect travelers from Wuhan who might have symptoms of a new respiratory virus. Many countries follow suit in the days to come.

Reuters

18 Jan

18 Jan–19 Jan 2020

ACTION

Prof. Nanshan Zhong leads mission to Wuhan

The Chinese National Health Commission sends a mission to Wuhan, led by Prof. Nanshan Zhong.

National Health Commission

19 Jan

ANNOUNCEMENT

WHO WPRO tweets: Evidence of limited h-to-h transmission

WHO WPRO
Published: 19 Jan 2020

"According to the latest info received and WHO analysis, there is evidence of limited human-to-human transmission… While there is currently no clear evidence of sustained human-to-human transmission, we do not have enough evidence to evaluate the full extent of human-to-human transmission."

WHO WPRO Twitter

NEWS REPORT

China announces intention to step up efforts to contain outbreak

Ahead of the Lunar New Year, China's National Health Commission says it will step up prevention and control measures. Wuhan's deputy mayor says he will strengthen oversight of big events and reduce public gatherings.

Reuters

CASES

China reaches 198 reported cases

Wuhan Municipal Health Commission announces 198 cases of nCoV-2019 and four deaths, as of 19 Jan. In Wuhan Jinyintan Hospital, a doctor reports 150 cases based on a clinical case definition.

Wuhan Municipal Health Commission, Report: Prof. Nanshan Zhong 10 Nov 2020

20 Jan

MEETING

Second meeting of the STAG-IH

WHO STAG-IH

STAG-IH experts discuss the epidemiological situation, clinical features, the development of a technical package (interim guidance), research and development (R&D) Blueprint landscape analyses (diagnostics, vaccines, and therapeutics). The R&D Blueprint Scientific Advisory Group and Global Coordination Mechanisms also meet that day.

WHO STAG-IH

NEWS BRIEFING

China medical expert confirms h-to-h transmission

Prof. Nanshan Zhong

National Health Commission delegation led by Prof. Nanshan Zhong announces on state TV cases involving h-to-h transmission, that medical staff have been infected, and that there are two cases in Guangdong Province. The delegation suggests people don't travel in and out of Wuhan.

National Health Commission, Reuters, Chinese Ministry of Education, IHR Review Committee Report

20 Jan–21 Jan 2020

ACTION

WHO China Country Office visits Wuhan

WHO China Country Office

WHO China Country Office has its first mission to Wuhan since the outbreak. The team visits the Wuhan Tianhe Airport, Zhongnan hospital and the Hubei provincial CDC, including the Biosafety Level 3 laboratory handling coronavirus specimens.

WHO staff interview, WHO Timeline, IHR Review Committee Report

NEWS REPORT

President Xi Jinping says China will curb outbreak

"People's lives and health should be given top priority and the spread of the outbreak should be resolutely curbed," state media quote President Xi Jinping.

Reuters

CASES

Republic of Korea: First reported cases

First reported cases in the Republic of Korea, imported from Wuhan.

WHO Dashboard and Situation Reports

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

CONTACT TRACING

Singapore implements comprehensive contact tracing

Government of Singapore

Singapore is the first country other than China in the Western Pacific Region (WPR) to implement comprehensive contact tracing.

Our World in Data

SCHOOL CLOSURES

China closes schools

Ministry of Education

China begins school closures.

EdSurge

ANNOUNCEMENT

Clear evidence of h-to-h transmission according to WHO WPRO tweet

WHO WPRO
Published: 21 Jan 2020

"It is now very clear from the latest information that there is at least some human-to-human transmission of #nCoV2019. Infections among health care workers strengthen the evidence for this."

WHO WPRO Tweet

NEWS REPORT

Risk to UK very low

"Based on the available evidence, the current risk to the UK is very low," says Dr. Nick Phin, deputy director of the National Infection Service (NIS). "We are... keeping the situation under constant review."

Reuters

NEWS REPORT

WHO expects further spread

"More cases should be expected in other parts of China and possibly other countries in the coming days," says WHO spokesman Tarik Jasarevic.

Reuters

CASES

China: Cases spread to 14 provinces

309 cases are reported in China, spread across 14 provinces/ municipalities.

WHO Situation Report

CASES

Multiple medical staff in Wuhan infected

Wuhan Municipal Health Commission

Wuhan Municipal Health Commission reports 15 medical staff confirmed as cases of pneumonia caused by new coronavirus infection in Wuhan.

China Daily

20 Jan, cont.

21 Jan

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

22 Jan

CONTACT TRACING

Germany implements comprehensive contact tracing

Government of Germany

Germany is the first country in the WHO European Region (EUR) to implement comprehensive contact tracing.

Our World in Data

NEWS REPORT

China reports 15 samples from Huanan Seafood Market contain virus

Published: 22 Jan 2020

It is unclear whether the virus is shed by humans or animals. Chinese scientists publish the genetic sequence from some samples, but the information provides no clues to the virus' origins.

China CDC, *NY Times*

CONTACT TRACING

Costa Rica introduces comprehensive contact tracing

Government of Costa Rica

Contact tracing for all COVID-19 cases is introduced in Costa Rica, the first country in the WHO Region of the Americas (AMR) to do so.

Our World in Data

MASK USAGE

France recommends mask wearing

Government of France

France recommends mask wearing, the first country in EUR to do so.

Our World in Data

22 Jan–23 Jan 2020

MEETING

WHO's IHR Emergency Committee starts first meeting

WHO

WHO's IHR Emergency Committee starts its first COVID-19-related meeting. On this day, WHO reports 314 cases, with 310 cases in 14 provinces and municipalities within China, and four confirmed cases in three countries outside China, all with direct connections to Wuhan.

IHR Committe Statement, *WHO Situation Report*

22 Jan–23 Jan 2020

MEETING

WHO's IHR Emergency Committee ends meeting. No PHEIC declared

WHO

The IHR Emergency Committee does not recommend the outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), but urges countries to be prepared for additional spread. The Committee agrees to meet again within 10 days. By this day, cases have increased to 581, with 571 cases in 24 provinces and municipalities within China, and 10 cases in four countries outside China, all connected to Wuhan.

IHR Committe Statement, *WHO Situation Report*

LOCKDOWN/ STAY-AT-HOME MEASURES

First lockdown in Wuhan

Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention

Lockdown initiated in Wuhan.

China CDC

Cases per million
China: 0.45

CASES

Singapore: First reported case

First reported case in Singapore.

WHO Statement

23 Jan

CASES

China: 18,700 estimated cases, R0 at 5.7

Sanche S, Lin Y, et al.
Published: July 2020

18,700 estimated cases in China. Transmission dynamics of early Wuhan spread were possibly as high as R0 5.7, with a doubling time of 2.3–3.3 days.

Emerging Infectious Diseases

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

PUBLICATION

Molecular assays to diagnose COVID-19

WHO HQ
Published: 24 Jan 2020

WHO publishes an overview of assays that have applied to Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics for participation in its assay assessment work.

WHO HQ

ADVICE

WHO recommends no restrictions on international traffic

WHO
Published: 24 Jan 2020

WHO updates advice for international traffic, recommending against restrictions, but supporting airport exit screening and suggesting possible entry screening.

WHO

MEETING

Informal consultation on therapeutics

WHO HQ
Published: 24 Jan 2020

WHO R&D Blueprint initiates an informal consultation on prioritization of candidate therapeutic agents for use in novel coronavirus 2019 infection.

WHO HQ

BORDER MEASURES

21 countries/areas have international screening in place

National governments

Officials across the globe from Africa to South America begin containment measures.

Our World in Data

CONTACT TRACING

Nepal introduces comprehensive contact tracing

Government of Nepal

Contact tracing for all cases of COVID-19 introduced in Nepal, the first country in SEAR to do so.

Our World in Data

Jan 24: Key scientific articles published in the Lancet

SCIENCE

Clinical characteristics, severity, and mortality published

Huang C, Wang Y, et al.

Common symptoms: cough, fever, short breath, and myalgias. Approximately 17-42% developed acute respiratory distress syndrome, 23-32% admitted to intensive care units, and 11-15% died. Of the 41 first laboratory-confirmed patients 27/41(66%) were found to be exposed to Huanan Seafood Market.

The Lancet

"Because of the pandemic potential of 2019-nCoV, careful surveillance is essential to monitor its future host adaption, viral evolution, infectivity, transmissibility, and pathogenicity."

SCIENCE

Family cluster suggests h-to-h transmission and asymptomatic infection

Chan JF-W, Yuan S, et al.

Study describes a family cluster where h-to-h transmission and asymptomatic infection is documented.

The Lancet

23 Jan, cont.

24 Jan

CASES

Vast majority of early infections in China undetected

Li R, Pei S, et al.
Published: 16 Mar 2020

Researchers estimate that 86% of all infections were undetected prior to the lockdown of Wuhan on 23 Jan., leading to rapid spread.

Science

CASES

Travel restrictions in China significantly reduced spread

Wells CR, Sah P, et al.
Published: 13 Mar 2020

Researchers estimate that travel restrictions enacted in China after 23 Jan. reduced the average daily rate of case exportations by 81.3%.

PNAS

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

NEWS REPORT

Trump: The US appreciates China's efforts and transparency

"China has been working very hard to contain the Coronavirus. The United States greatly appreciates their efforts and transparency. It will all work out well. In particular, on behalf of the American People, I want to thank President Xi!" Trump writes in a tweet.

Reuters

CASES

France and Viet Nam: First reported cases

France and Viet Nam

First reported cases in Viet Nam and France. The two Vietnamese cases involve a father who travelled to China, who met his son in Viet Nam.

WHO Dashboard and Situation Reports, NEJM, franceinfo

ACTION

WHO grades outbreak as level three emergency

The SARS-CoV-2 outbreak is elevated to the highest level of emergency. WHO HQ takes over emergency management from the regional office.

WHO internal documents

CASES

Australia: First reported cases

First cases reported in Australia.

WHO Dashboard and Situation Reports, Australian Department of Health

CASES

Index case disembarks Diamond Princess in Hong Kong

Government of Hong Kong
Published: 01 Feb 2020

An 80 year old man disembarks the Diamond Princess in Hong Kong with a cough. On 1 Feb. he tests positive for COVID-19.

Government of Hong Kong, Journal of Travel Medicine

MASK USAGE

First mask mandates in Guangdong, China

The Guangdong Provincial Headquarters Office for the Prevention and Control of Pneumonia Infected by the Novel Coronavirus

Mask wearing in public places made mandatory in Guangdong province.

Xinhuanet

Cases per million
China: 1.44

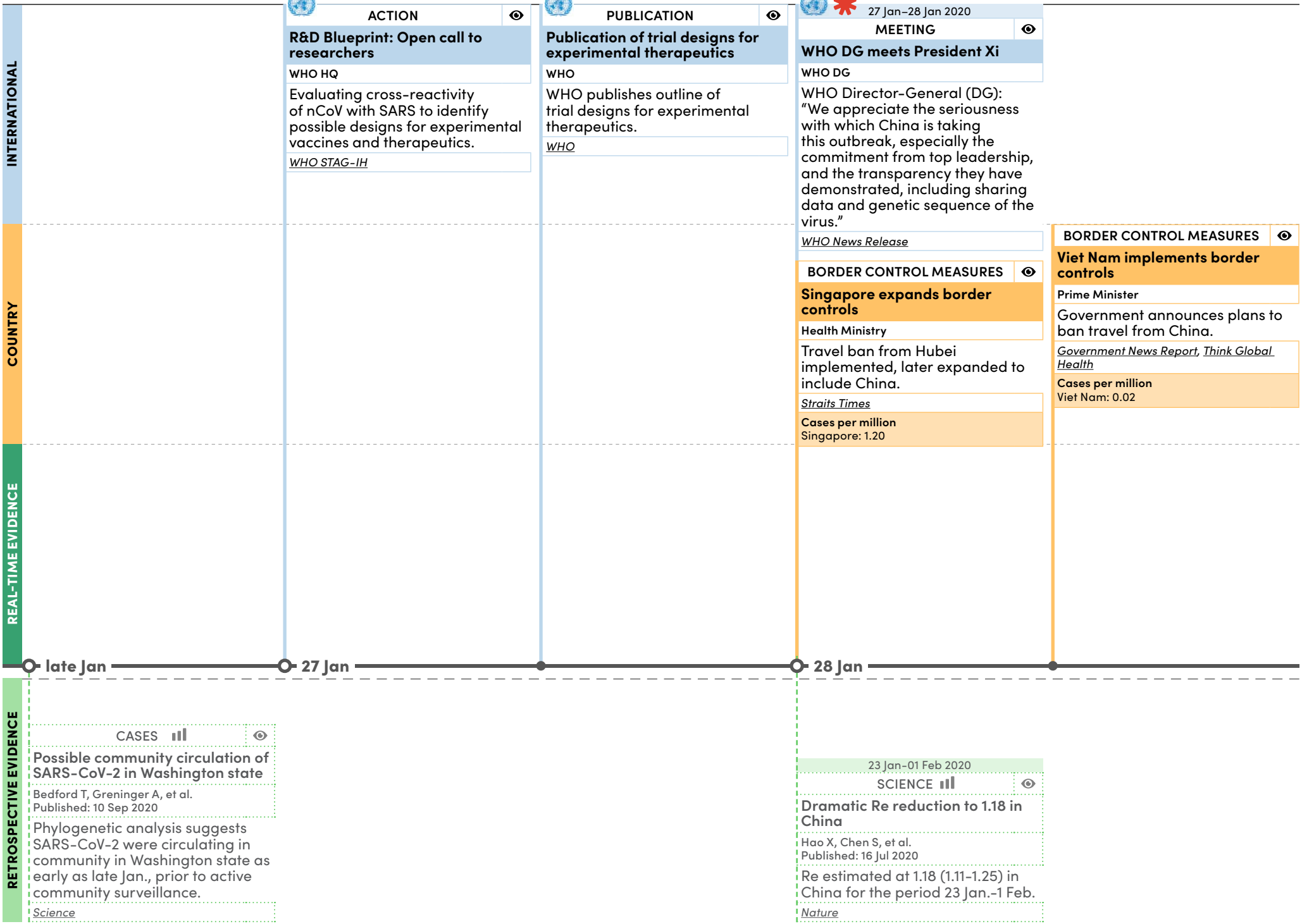
CASES

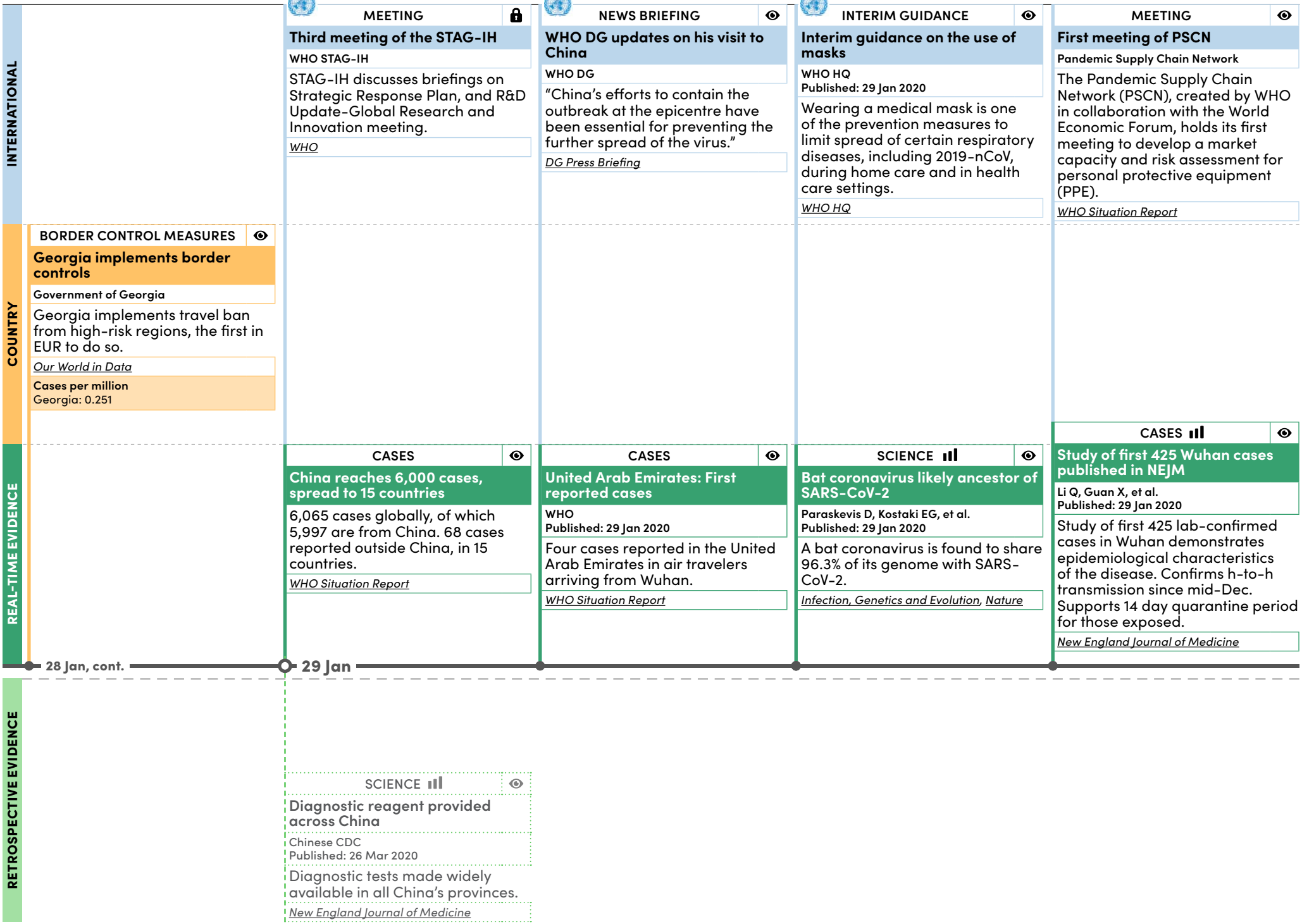
China nears 2,000 cases, spread to 10 countries

2,014 cases globally, of which 1,985 are from China. There are 29 cases in 10 other countries.

WHO Situation Report

24 Jan, cont. — 25 Jan — 26 Jan


INTERNATIONAL
COUNTRY
REAL-TIME EVIDENCE
RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE
ACTION
R&D Blueprint: Open call to researchers
WHO HQ
Evaluating cross-reactivity of nCoV with SARS to identify possible designs for experimental vaccines and therapeutics.
WHO STAG-IH
PUBLICATION
Publication of trial designs for experimental therapeutics
WHO
WHO publishes outline of trial designs for experimental therapeutics.
WHO
27 Jan–28 Jan 2020
MEETING
WHO DG meets President Xi
WHO DG
WHO Director-General (DG): "We appreciate the seriousness with which China is taking this outbreak, especially the commitment from top leadership, and the transparency they have demonstrated, including sharing data and genetic sequence of the virus."
WHO News Release
BORDER CONTROL MEASURES
Singapore expands border controls
Health Ministry
Travel ban from Hubei implemented, later expanded to include China.
Straits Times
Cases per million
Singapore: 1.20
BORDER CONTROL MEASURES
Viet Nam implements border controls
Prime Minister
Government announces plans to ban travel from China.
Government News Report, Think Global Health
Cases per million
Viet Nam: 0.02
late Jan
27 Jan
28 Jan
CASES
Possible community circulation of SARS-CoV-2 in Washington state
Bedford T, Greninger A, et al.
Published: 10 Sep 2020
Phylogenetic analysis suggests SARS-CoV-2 were circulating in community in Washington state as early as late Jan., prior to active community surveillance.
Science
23 Jan-01 Feb 2020
SCIENCE
Dramatic Re reduction to 1.18 in China
Hao X, Chen S, et al.
Published: 16 Jul 2020
Re estimated at 1.18 (1.11-1.25) in China for the period 23 Jan.-1 Feb.
Nature


INTERNATIONAL
COUNTRY
REAL-TIME EVIDENCE
RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE
MEETING
Third meeting of the STAG-IH
WHO STAG-IH
STAG-IH discusses briefings on Strategic Response Plan, and R&D Update-Global Research and Innovation meeting.
WHO
NEWS BRIEFING
WHO DG updates on his visit to China
WHO DG
"China's efforts to contain the outbreak at the epicentre have been essential for preventing the further spread of the virus."
DG Press Briefing
INTERIM GUIDANCE
Interim guidance on the use of masks
WHO HQ
Published: 29 Jan 2020
Wearing a medical mask is one of the prevention measures to limit spread of certain respiratory diseases, including 2019-nCoV, during home care and in health care settings.
WHO HQ
MEETING
First meeting of PSCN
Pandemic Supply Chain Network
The Pandemic Supply Chain Network (PSCN), created by WHO in collaboration with the World Economic Forum, holds its first meeting to develop a market capacity and risk assessment for personal protective equipment (PPE).
WHO Situation Report
BORDER CONTROL MEASURES
Georgia implements border controls
Government of Georgia
Georgia implements travel ban from high-risk regions, the first in EUR to do so.
Our World in Data
Cases per million
Georgia: 0.251
CASES
China reaches 6,000 cases, spread to 15 countries
6,065 cases globally, of which 5,997 are from China. 68 cases reported outside China, in 15 countries.
WHO Situation Report
CASES
United Arab Emirates: First reported cases
WHO
Published: 29 Jan 2020
Four cases reported in the United Arab Emirates in air travelers arriving from Wuhan.
WHO Situation Report
SCIENCE
Bat coronavirus likely ancestor of SARS-CoV-2
Paraskevis D, Kostaki EG, et al.
Published: 29 Jan 2020
A bat coronavirus is found to share 96.3% of its genome with SARS-CoV-2.
Infection, Genetics and Evolution, Nature
CASES
Study of first 425 Wuhan cases published in NEJM
Li Q, Guan X, et al.
Published: 29 Jan 2020
Study of first 425 lab-confirmed cases in Wuhan demonstrates epidemiological characteristics of the disease. Confirms h-to-h transmission since mid-Dec. Supports 14 day quarantine period for those exposed.
New England Journal of Medicine
28 Jan, cont.
29 Jan
SCIENCE
Diagnostic reagent provided across China
Chinese CDC
Published: 26 Mar 2020
Diagnostic tests made widely available in all China's provinces.
New England Journal of Medicine

INTERNATIONAL

ALERT

WHO DG declares PHEIC

On the advice of the second meeting of the IHR Emergency Committee, the WHO DG declares a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. By this day, cases have increased to 7,834, with 7,736 in China and 98 in 18 countries outside China.

DG Statement

COUNTRY

BORDER CONTROL MEASURES

Pakistan implements border controls

Government of Pakistan

Pakistan introduces temporary ban on travel from high-risk regions, the first in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) to do so.

Our World in Data

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

NEWS REPORT

Nature news summarises latest science on epidemic

Published: 30 Jan 2020

Article summarises key knowledge at the time: Documents possible asymptomatic transmission; R0 of 1.4-2.5; not as deadly as SARS; bat source likely; virus likely emerged Nov. 2019.

Nature

CASES

India: First reported case

First case reported in India.

WHO Situation Report

SCIENCE

SARS-CoV-2 established as new to humans

Lu R, Zhao X, et al.
Published: 30 Jan 2020

Genomic sequences of early patients with COVID-19 are found to be almost (99.98%), suggesting the virus is new to humans.

The Lancet

SCIENCE

Case study of pre-symptomatic transmission published in NEJM

Rothe C, Schunk M, et al.
Published: 30 Jan 2020

Traveller from China without symptoms is identified as the index case for a cluster of COVID-19 cases in Germany. The Chinese visitor eventually develops symptoms and tests positive, indicating transmission during incubation period.

New England Journal of Medicine

CASES

Italy: First reported cases

First two cases reported in Italy, both with travel history to Wuhan.

WHO Dashboard and Situation Reports

30 Jan

31 Jan

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

SCIENCE

Rt <1 in 30 provinces outside Hubei

Zhang J, Litvinova M, et al.
Published: 02 Apr 2020

Rt estimated to be below the epidemic threshold (<1) in 30 provinces outside Hubei after 30 Jan., suggesting containment measures rapidly lowered transmission.

The Lancet

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

BORDER CONTROL MEASURES

Two countries implement border controls

Governments of El Salvador and Jamaica

Jamaica bans travel from China. El Salvador implements travel restrictions for high-risk countries, the first country in AMR to do so.

Jamaica, *El Salvador*

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Viet Nam closes schools

Government of Viet Nam

Government of Viet Nam mandates that all schools should remain closed after Lunar New Year holiday.

Our World in Data

DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY

Viet Nam declares national epidemic

Prime Minister

Viet Nam declares a national epidemic.

Hanoi Times

Cases per million
Viet Nam: 0.06

CONTACT TRACING

Saudi Arabia implements comprehensive contact tracing

Government of Saudi Arabia

Contact tracing for all cases of COVID-19 introduced in Saudi Arabia, the first in EMR to do so.

Our World in Data

NEWS REPORT

NY Times publishes account of events before Wuhan lockdown

Published: 01 Feb 2020

The NY Times publishes an account of events leading up to the lockdown in Wuhan. This includes early suspicions of the possibility of h-to-h transmission. The article also outlines ways in which people felt Wuhan authorities underplayed the severity of the outbreak, and would have liked to see more transparency.

NY Times

ACTION

WHO ships first PCR-based diagnostic tests

WHO

The first consignment of validated PCR-based diagnostic tests is shipped by WHO from Germany to countries and WHO Regional Offices.

WHO internal documents

BORDER CONTROL MEASURES

Fiji implements border controls

Government of Fiji

Travel from China banned for all foreigners.

Fiji Sun

Cases per million
Fiji: 0.00

SCIENCE

Scientists forecast global pandemic

Wu JT, Leung K, Leung G
Published: 31 Jan 2020

Researchers estimate 75,815 cases in Wuhan, forecast exponential growth in major Chinese cities and global spread, calling for preparedness plans.

The Lancet

CASES

China surpasses 10,000 cases, spread to 23 countries

11,821 cases in China, 132 cases outside China, in 23 countries.

WHO Situation Report

CASES

First reported death outside China

Published: 02 Feb 2020

The first death outside China is reported in the Philippines.

WHO Situation Report

31 Jan, cont. — 01 Feb — 02 Feb

NEWS REPORT

WHO Representative to China holds video briefing with diplomats

Published: 02 Apr 20

On the video briefing, WHO's representative to China "praised the Chinese...response. Then he went a step further, calling on other countries not to step out of line with the WHO recommendations..."

Globe and Mail

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

BORDER CONTROL MEASURES

The US implements border controls

US President

Presidential proclamation issued suspending entry into the US of "aliens" who had been in China in the preceding 14 days.

Presidential Proclamation

Cases per million
United States: 0.03

BORDER CONTROL MEASURES

New Zealand bans Chinese travellers and boosts border screening

Government of New Zealand

Restrictions put in place preventing "foreign nationals from or transiting through mainland China from entering New Zealand."

The Guardian

02 Feb, cont.

MEETING

WHO DG gives speech at WHO EB meeting

WHO DG

WHO DG begins reporting on the COVID-19 PHEIC from paragraph 53 of his remarks. The DG also quotes President Xi Jinping, who during the DG's visit to Beijing said: "We will take serious measures at the epicentre, at the source, in order to protect our people, and also to prevent the spread of the virus to other countries."

WHO

03 Feb

ACTION

Africa CDC establishes continent-wide task force

Africa CDC
Published: 05 Feb 2020

Africa CDC inagurates Africa Task Force for Novel Coronavirus (AFCOR); as of yet no cases confirmed in Africa.

Africa CDC

ACTION

Diamond Princess anchors at Yokohama

Diamond Princess

The Diamond Princess cruise ship, with 2,666 passengers and 1,045 crew members, quarantines off Yokohama port after a 14 day journey to Hong Kong, Viet Nam, and Taiwan.

Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness

SCIENCE

Bat coronavirus is possible early progenitor

Zhou P, Yang X-L, et al.
Published: 03 Feb 2020

At the whole genome level, the RaTG13 bat coronavirus from Yunnan province is 96% concordant with the SARS-CoV-2 genome.

Nature

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

04 Feb

MEETING

WHO holds technical briefing on COVID-19 at WHO EB meeting

WHO DG

The WHO DG underlines that "99% of the cases are in China and 97% of the deaths are in Hubei Province." Nonetheless, he says, "Now is the moment for all countries to be preparing themselves" and notes that WHO has begun distributing supplies to 24 countries. He also urges countries to share data, saying WHO has received complete case report forms for only 38% of 176 cases outside China, including from high-income countries. He asks countries not to impose restrictions that are "inconsistent with the International Health Regulations," noting that 22 countries already have done so.

WHO

NEWS REPORT

WHO calls for improved data sharing

Published: 04 Feb 2020

WHO DG urges all health ministers to improve data sharing on coronavirus immediately and says he will send a team of international experts to work with Chinese counterparts.

Reuters

05 Feb

PUBLICATION

Strategic preparedness and response plan

WHO HQ
Published: 04 Feb 2020

WHO publishes COVID-19 strategic preparedness and response plan outlining public health measures for the international community. The 2019_nCoV Simulation Exercise to enhance national preparedness efforts is also made available online.

WHO HQ

BORDER CONTROL MEASURES

The Republic of Korea issues border measures

Ministry of Health and Welfare

Special entry procedures applied for all travelers from China.

Ministry of Health News Release

Cases per million
Republic of Korea: 0.31

MEETING

Fourth meeting of the STAG-IH

WHO STAG-IH

STAG-IH experts review WHO response strategy and discuss 'strategy switch.'

WHO STAG-IH

ACTION

WHO DG begins daily media briefings

WHO
Published: 05 Feb 2020

WHO DG begins daily media briefings to provide updates on the COVID-19 pandemic, clarify public health measures, and encourage action.

WHO

06 Feb

CONTACT TRACING

Sri Lanka implements comprehensive contact tracing

Government of Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka implements comprehensive contact tracing.

Our World in Data

Cases per million
Sri Lanka: 0.05

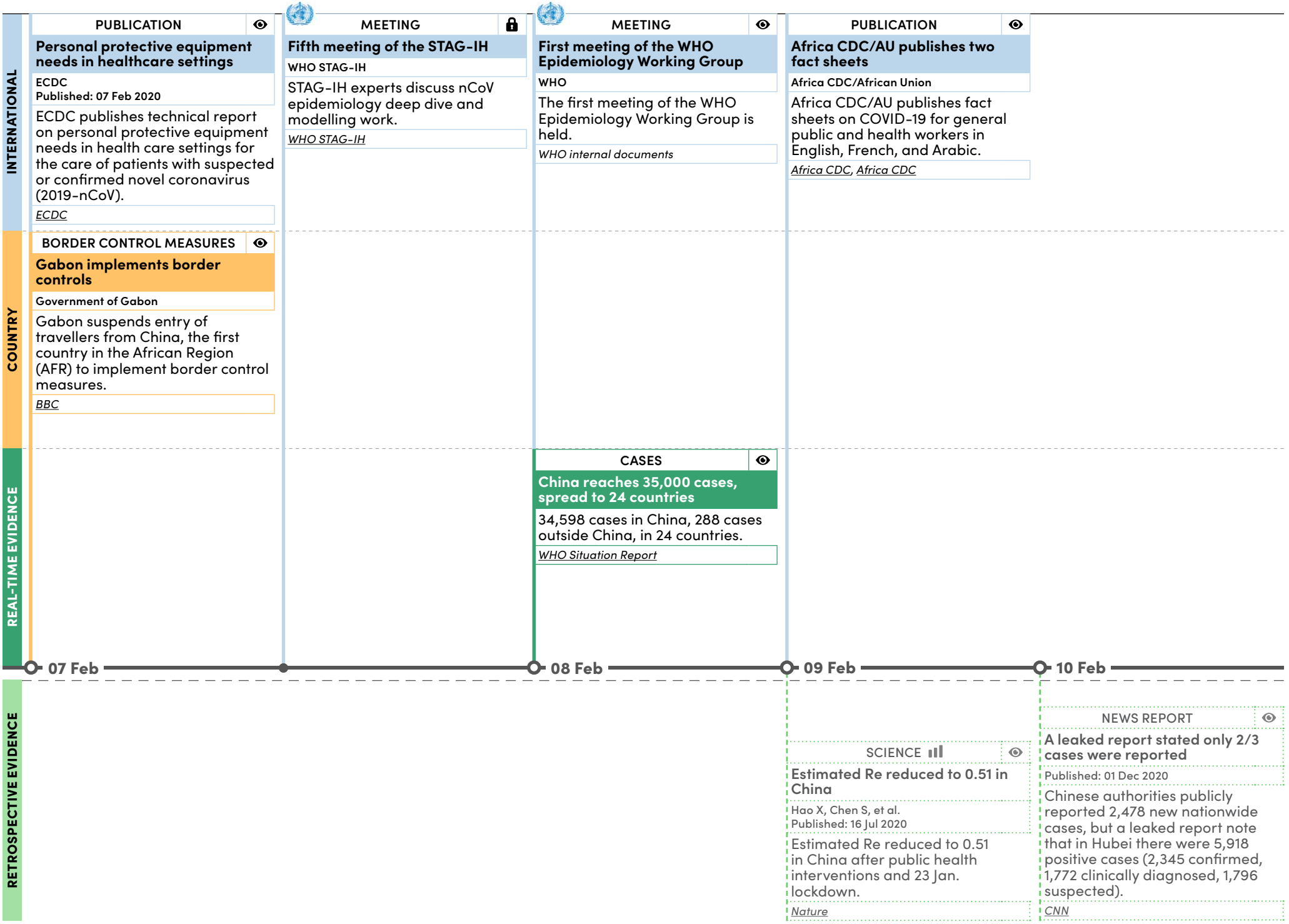
NEWS REPORT

Chinese ambassador: UK overreacted to coronavirus

Published: 06 Feb 2020

Britain's advice to its nationals to leave China because of outbreak in Hubei was an overreaction, the Chinese ambassador to London says. "We asked them to take the advice of the WHO to make a reasonable response. Do not overreact."

Reuters


INTERNATIONAL
COUNTRY
REAL-TIME EVIDENCE
RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE
PUBLICATION
Personal protective equipment needs in healthcare settings
ECDC
Published: 07 Feb 2020
ECDC publishes technical report on personal protective equipment needs in health care settings for the care of patients with suspected or confirmed novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV).
ECDC
MEETING
Fifth meeting of the STAG-IH
WHO STAG-IH
STAG-IH experts discuss nCoV epidemiology deep dive and modelling work.
WHO STAG-IH
MEETING
First meeting of the WHO Epidemiology Working Group
WHO
The first meeting of the WHO Epidemiology Working Group is held.
WHO internal documents
PUBLICATION
Africa CDC/AU publishes two fact sheets
Africa CDC/African Union
Africa CDC/AU publishes fact sheets on COVID-19 for general public and health workers in English, French, and Arabic.
Africa CDC, Africa CDC
BORDER CONTROL MEASURES
Gabon implements border controls
Government of Gabon
Gabon suspends entry of travellers from China, the first country in the African Region (AFR) to implement border control measures.
BBC
CASES
China reaches 35,000 cases, spread to 24 countries
34,598 cases in China, 288 cases outside China, in 24 countries.
WHO Situation Report
07 Feb
08 Feb
09 Feb
10 Feb
SCIENCE
Estimated Re reduced to 0.51 in China
Hao X, Chen S, et al.
Published: 16 Jul 2020
Estimated Re reduced to 0.51 in China after public health interventions and 23 Jan. lockdown.
Nature
NEWS REPORT
A leaked report stated only 2/3 cases were reported
Published: 01 Dec 2020
Chinese authorities publicly reported 2,478 new nationwide cases, but a leaked report note that in Hubei there were 5,918 positive cases (2,345 confirmed, 1,772 clinically diagnosed, 1,796 suspected).
CNN

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

MEETING

Sixth meeting of the STAG-IH

WHO STAG-IH

STAG-IH expert meeting discusses clinical aspects of nCoV.

WHO STAG-IH

MEETING

First meeting of the UN Crisis Management Team

UN Crisis Management Team

WHO activates the United Nation (UN) Crisis Management Team, chaired by the Executive Director (ED) of the WHO Health Emergencies Program, to coordinate UN efforts to respond collectively to the 2019-nCoV outbreak.

DG Statement

ANNOUNCEMENT

WHO names disease as COVID-19

WHO

The name of the disease, short for Coronavirus Disease, was chosen to avoid inaccuracy and stigma and therefore does not refer to a geographical location, an animal, an individual, or group of people.

DG Statement

11 Feb–12 Feb 2020

MEETING

WHO convenes global research and innovation forum

WHO

300 experts meet in person in Geneva, with a further 150 joining online, to prioritise research needs and discuss funding.

WHO

PUBLICATION

COVID-19: What is next for public health?

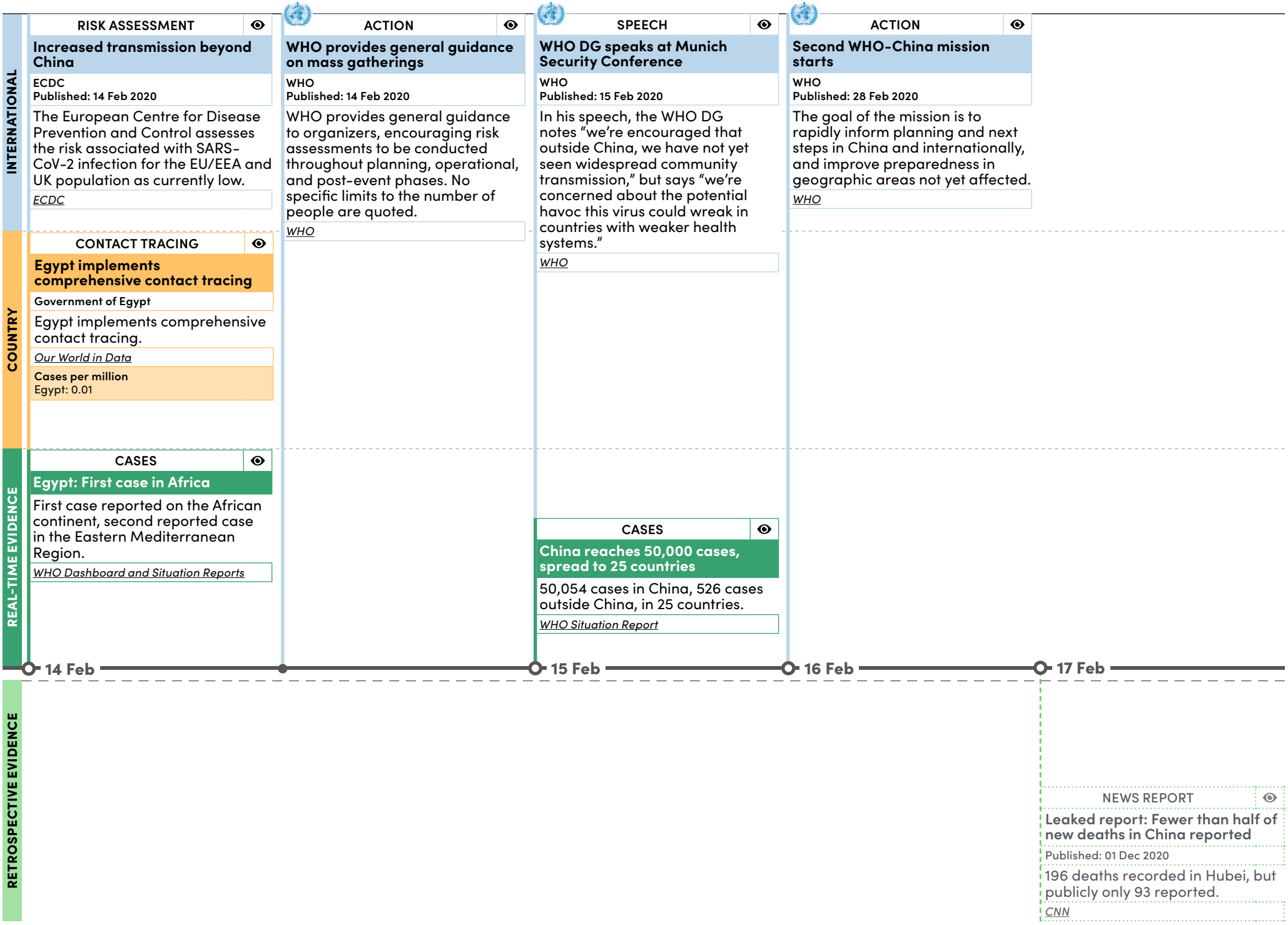
WHO STAG-IH

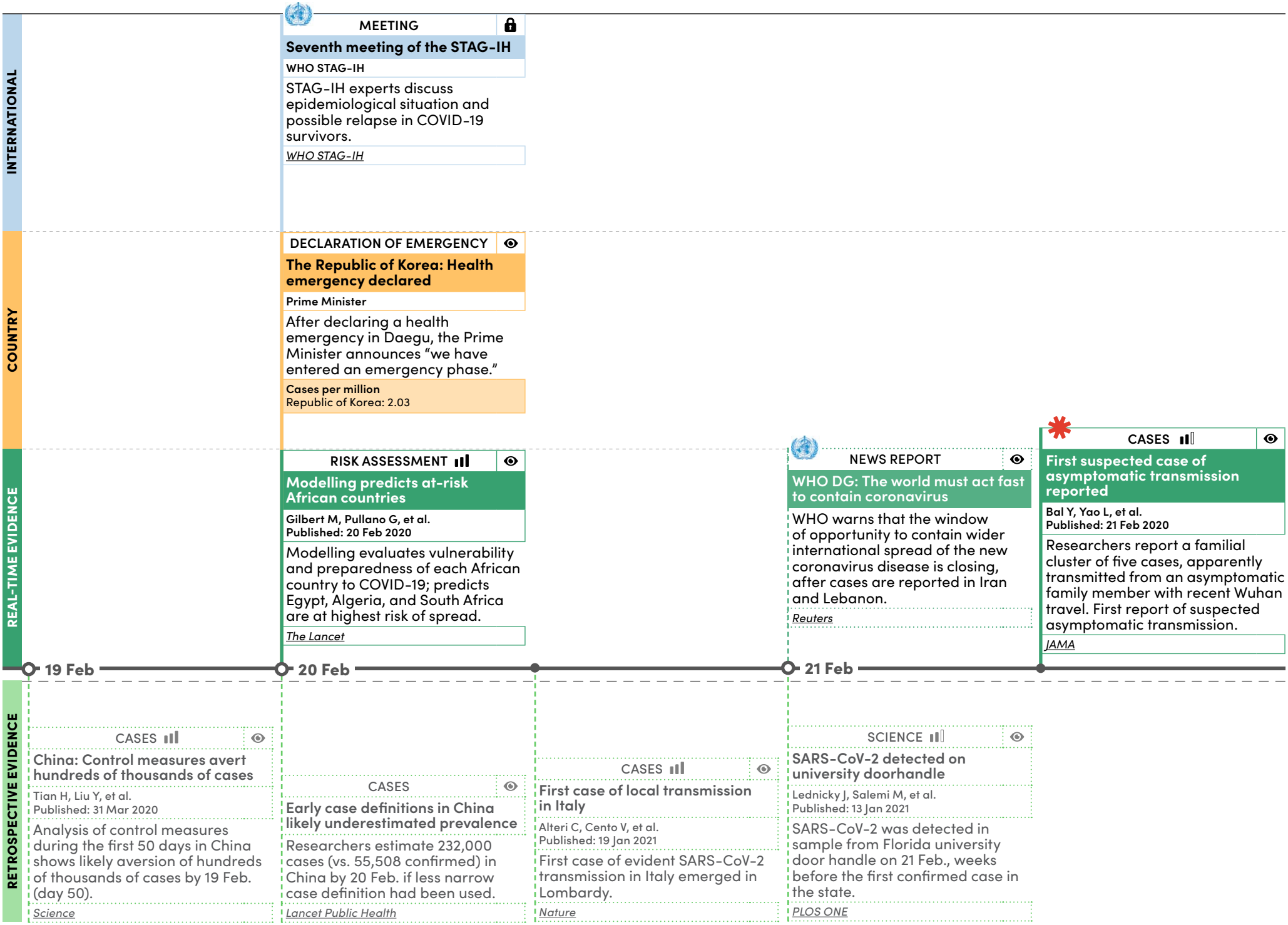
A STAG-IH review shows strategy of containment for elimination is crucial and should continue until the end of February.

The Lancet

11 Feb

12 Feb


INTERNATIONAL
COUNTRY
REAL-TIME EVIDENCE
RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE
RISK ASSESSMENT
Increased transmission beyond China
ECDC
Published: 14 Feb 2020
The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control assesses the risk associated with SARS-CoV-2 infection for the EU/EEA and UK population as currently low.
ECDC
ACTION
WHO provides general guidance on mass gatherings
WHO
Published: 14 Feb 2020
WHO provides general guidance to organizers, encouraging risk assessments to be conducted throughout planning, operational, and post-event phases. No specific limits to the number of people are quoted.
WHO
SPEECH
WHO DG speaks at Munich Security Conference
WHO
Published: 15 Feb 2020
In his speech, the WHO DG notes "we're encouraged that outside China, we have not yet seen widespread community transmission," but says "we're concerned about the potential havoc this virus could wreak in countries with weaker health systems."
WHO
ACTION
Second WHO-China mission starts
WHO
Published: 28 Feb 2020
The goal of the mission is to rapidly inform planning and next steps in China and internationally, and improve preparedness in geographic areas not yet affected.
WHO
CONTACT TRACING
Egypt implements comprehensive contact tracing
Government of Egypt
Egypt implements comprehensive contact tracing.
Our World in Data
Cases per million
Egypt: 0.01
CASES
Egypt: First case in Africa
First case reported on the African continent, second reported case in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.
WHO Dashboard and Situation Reports
CASES
China reaches 50,000 cases, spread to 25 countries
50,054 cases in China, 526 cases outside China, in 25 countries.
WHO Situation Report
NEWS REPORT
Leaked report: Fewer than half of new deaths in China reported
Published: 01 Dec 2020
196 deaths recorded in Hubei, but publicly only 93 reported.
CNN
14 Feb
15 Feb
16 Feb
17 Feb


INTERNATIONAL
COUNTRY
REAL-TIME EVIDENCE
RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE
MEETING
Seventh meeting of the STAG-IH
WHO STAG-IH
STAG-IH experts discuss epidemiological situation and possible relapse in COVID-19 survivors.
WHO STAG-IH
DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY
The Republic of Korea: Health emergency declared
Prime Minister
After declaring a health emergency in Daegu, the Prime Minister announces "we have entered an emergency phase."
Cases per million
Republic of Korea: 2.03
RISK ASSESSMENT
Modelling predicts at-risk African countries
Gilbert M, Pullano G, et al.
Published: 20 Feb 2020
Modelling evaluates vulnerability and preparedness of each African country to COVID-19; predicts Egypt, Algeria, and South Africa are at highest risk of spread.
The Lancet
NEWS REPORT
WHO DG: The world must act fast to contain coronavirus
WHO warns that the window of opportunity to contain wider international spread of the new coronavirus disease is closing, after cases are reported in Iran and Lebanon.
Reuters
CASES
First suspected case of asymptomatic transmission reported
Bal Y, Yao L, et al.
Published: 21 Feb 2020
Researchers report a familial cluster of five cases, apparently transmitted from an asymptomatic family member with recent Wuhan travel. First report of suspected asymptomatic transmission.
JAMA
19 Feb
20 Feb
21 Feb
CASES
China: Control measures avert hundreds of thousands of cases
Tian H, Liu Y, et al.
Published: 31 Mar 2020
Analysis of control measures during the first 50 days in China shows likely aversion of hundreds of thousands of cases by 19 Feb. (day 50).
Science
CASES
Early case definitions in China likely underestimated prevalence
Researchers estimate 232,000 cases (vs. 55,508 confirmed) in China by 20 Feb. if less narrow case definition had been used.
Lancet Public Health
CASES
First case of local transmission in Italy
Alteri C, Cento V, et al.
Published: 19 Jan 2021
First case of evident SARS-CoV-2 transmission in Italy emerged in Lombardy.
Nature
SCIENCE
SARS-CoV-2 detected on university doorhandle
Lednicky J, Salemi M, et al.
Published: 13 Jan 2021
SARS-CoV-2 was detected in sample from Florida university door handle on 21 Feb., weeks before the first confirmed case in the state.
PLOS ONE

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

22 Feb

REPORT

African Ministers of Health meeting

Africa CDC/African Union

With just one case on the continent, there is an emergency meeting of African Ministers of Health on the COVID-19 outbreak.

Africa CDC

CASES

China reaches 76,000 cases, spread to 28 countries

76,392 cases in China, 1,402 cases outside China, in 28 countries.

WHO Situation Report

23 Feb

LOCKDOWN/ STAY-AT-HOME MEASURES

Areas of Italy introduce lockdown/stay-at-home measures

Government of Italy

Several municipalities in northern Italy orders lockdown, the first in WHO EUR to do so.

The Guardian

Cases per million
Italy: 2.564

CASES

Japan: Diamond Princess reaches 691 cases

Nakazawa E, Ino H, Akabayashi A
Published: 24 Mar 2020

691 cases confirmed on board compared to 10 cases 10 Feb. The effectiveness and validity of infection control, justification for the timing of inspections, and nature of COVID-19 are all in question.

Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness

24 Feb

ACTION

Joint WHO and ECDC mission to Italy begins

WHO, ECDC

The joint WHO and ECDC mission arrives in Italy. At this stage, Italy has reported 148 confirmed cases, including 48 new cases in the last 24 hours.

WHO Europe, *WHO*

MASK USAGE

Oman recommends mask wearing

Government of Oman

Oman recommends mask wearing, the first in EMR to do so.

Our World in Data

Cases per million
Oman: 0.392

25 Feb

MEETING

Eighth meeting of the STAG-IH

WHO STAG-IH

STAG-IH experts discuss hot spot issues and the introduction of the WHO Information Network for Epidemics.

WHO STAG-IH

NEWS REPORT

Coronavirus infections mount after cruise ship "fiasco"

Published: 25 Feb 2020

There are fears that Japan's handling of the crisis may lead to new chains of infection. There are now 700 confirmed COVID-19 cases linked to the Diamond Princess, not counting infections discovered among passengers after they have arrived home.

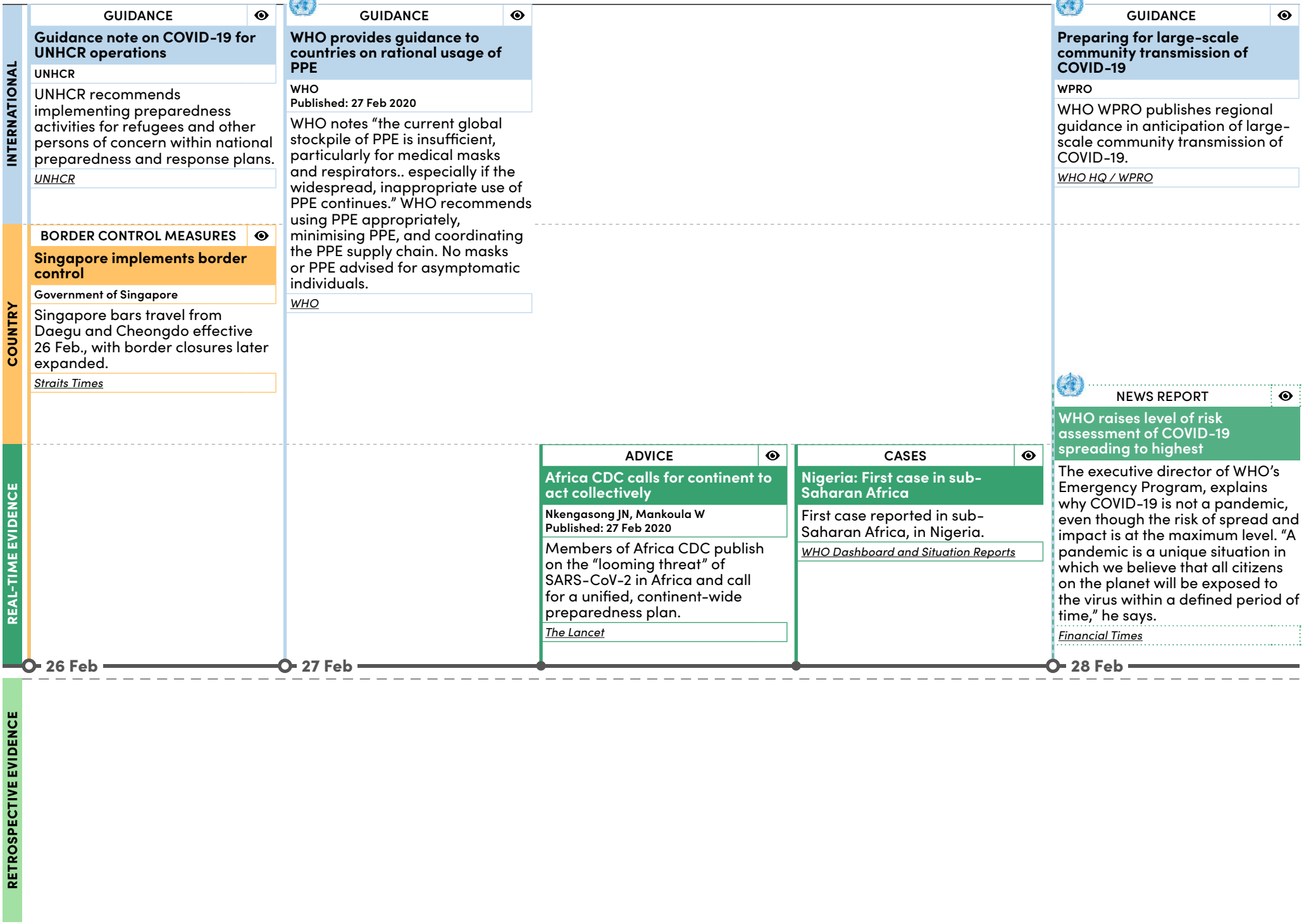
Science Magazine

CASES

Brazil: First case in Latin America

First case reported in Latin America, in Brazil.

WHO Situation Report


INTERNATIONAL
COUNTRY
REAL-TIME EVIDENCE
RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE
GUIDANCE
Guidance note on COVID-19 for UNHCR operations
UNHCR
UNHCR recommends implementing preparedness activities for refugees and other persons of concern within national preparedness and response plans.
UNHCR
BORDER CONTROL MEASURES
Singapore implements border control
Government of Singapore
Singapore bars travel from Daegu and Cheongdo effective 26 Feb., with border closures later expanded.
Straits Times
GUIDANCE
WHO provides guidance to countries on rational usage of PPE
WHO
Published: 27 Feb 2020
WHO notes "the current global stockpile of PPE is insufficient, particularly for medical masks and respirators.. especially if the widespread, inappropriate use of PPE continues." WHO recommends using PPE appropriately, minimising PPE, and coordinating the PPE supply chain. No masks or PPE advised for asymptomatic individuals.
WHO
ADVICE
Africa CDC calls for continent to act collectively
Nkengasong JN, Mankoula W
Published: 27 Feb 2020
Members of Africa CDC publish on the "looming threat" of SARS-CoV-2 in Africa and call for a unified, continent-wide preparedness plan.
The Lancet
CASES
Nigeria: First case in sub-Saharan Africa
First case reported in sub-Saharan Africa, in Nigeria.
WHO Dashboard and Situation Reports
GUIDANCE
Preparing for large-scale community transmission of COVID-19
WPRO
WHO WPRO publishes regional guidance in anticipation of large-scale community transmission of COVID-19.
WHO HQ / WPRO
NEWS REPORT
WHO raises level of risk assessment of COVID-19 spreading to highest
The executive director of WHO's Emergency Program, explains why COVID-19 is not a pandemic, even though the risk of spread and impact is at the maximum level. "A pandemic is a unique situation in which we believe that all citizens on the planet will be exposed to the virus within a defined period of time," he says.
Financial Times
26 Feb
27 Feb
28 Feb

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

28 Feb, cont.

PUBLICATION

Report from the second WHO-China mission released

Aylward B, Liang W, et al.
Published: 28 Feb 2020

The report form the 16-24 Feb. mission, co-written by China, outlines disease severity and transmission dynamics, as well as the control measures proving to be effective.

WHO

Highlights the importance of case definition, and the measures that successfully reduced transmission.

NEWS REPORT

WHO: The world is not ready to take same measures as China

Report says to take measures such as proactive surveillance, rapid diagnosis, immediate isolation, track and quarantine contacts, and achieve a high degree of population understanding and acceptance.

Reuters

29 Feb

CONTACT TRACING

Nigeria implements comprehensive contact tracing

Government of Nigeria

Nigeria is the first country in the AFR to implement comprehensive contact tracing.

Our World in Data

SCIENCE

Asymptomatic people can be potential sources

Huang R, Xia J, et al.
Published: 28 Feb 2020

Analysis of a family cluster of patients provides evidence that asymptomatic people can be potential sources of SARS-CoV-2 infection.

The Lancet Infectious Diseases

GUIDANCE

WHO publishes quarantine guidance

WHO
Published: 29 Feb 2020

WHO recommends "the global containment strategy includes the rapid identification of laboratory-confirmed cases, and their isolation and management in either a medical facility or at home." For such contacts, WHO recommends that such persons be quarantined for 14 days.

WHO

01 Mar

MASK USAGE

Japan recommends mask wearing

Government of Japan

Face coverings recommended by the government.

Our World in Data

Cases per million
Japan: 2.05

CASES

Spread in China slows down, global surge begins

79,968 cases in China, 7,169 cases in 58 countries outside China.

WHO Situation Report

02 Mar

SCHOOL CLOSURES

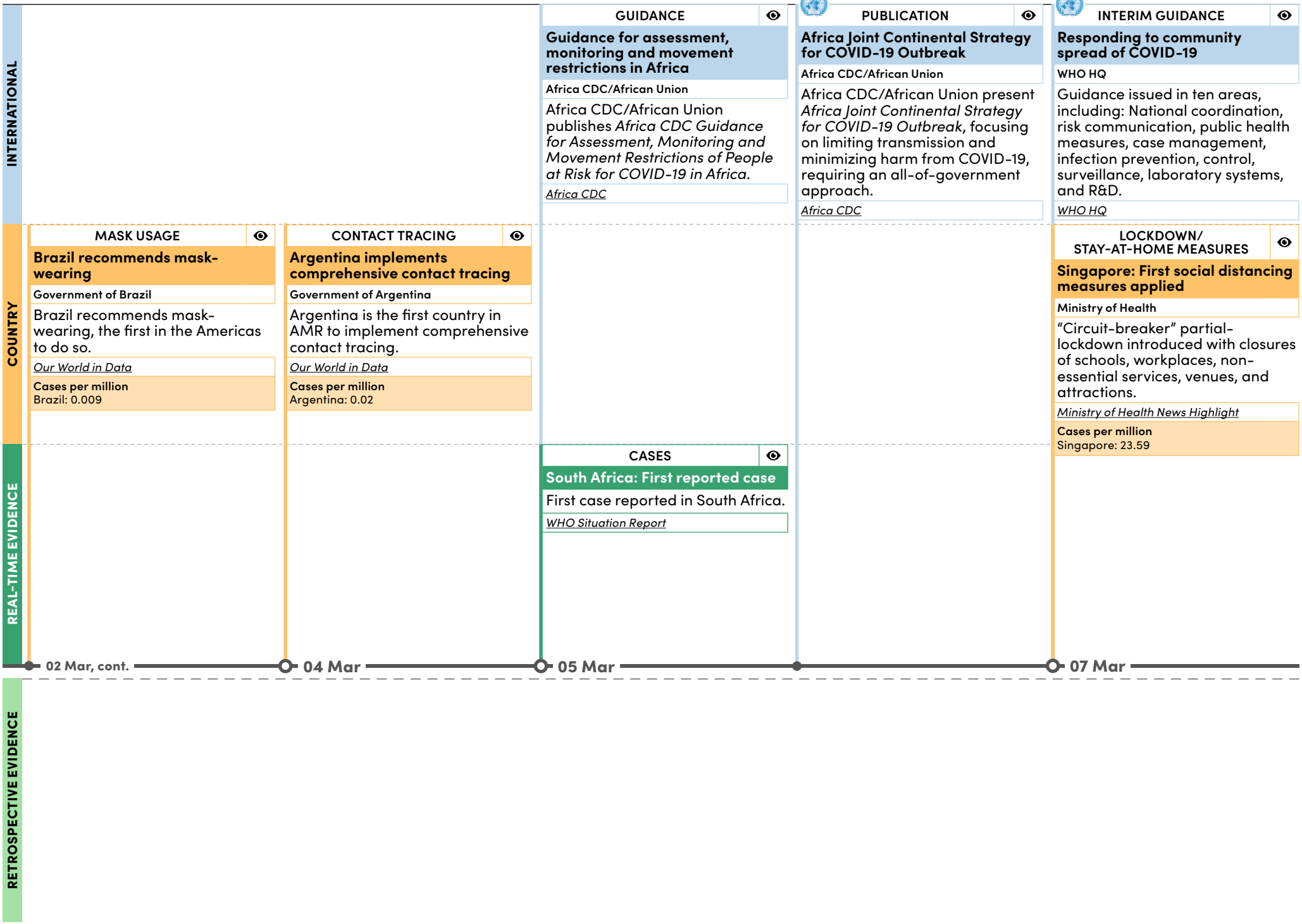
Japan closes schools

Prime Minister

Closure of elementary, junior high, and senior high schools as well as "schools for special needs education."

Prime Minister's Statement

Cases per million
Japan: 2.20


INTERNATIONAL
COUNTRY
REAL-TIME EVIDENCE
RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE
MASK USAGE
Brazil recommends mask-wearing
Government of Brazil
Brazil recommends mask-wearing, the first in the Americas to do so.
Our World in Data
Cases per million
Brazil: 0.009
CONTACT TRACING
Argentina implements comprehensive contact tracing
Government of Argentina
Argentina is the first country in AMR to implement comprehensive contact tracing.
Our World in Data
Cases per million
Argentina: 0.02
GUIDANCE
Guidance for assessment, monitoring and movement restrictions in Africa
Africa CDC/African Union
Africa CDC/African Union publishes Africa CDC Guidance for Assessment, Monitoring and Movement Restrictions of People at Risk for COVID-19 in Africa.
Africa CDC
CASES
South Africa: First reported case
First case reported in South Africa.
WHO Situation Report
PUBLICATION
Africa Joint Continental Strategy for COVID-19 Outbreak
Africa CDC/African Union
Africa CDC/African Union present Africa Joint Continental Strategy for COVID-19 Outbreak, focusing on limiting transmission and minimizing harm from COVID-19, requiring an all-of-government approach.
Africa CDC
INTERIM GUIDANCE
Responding to community spread of COVID-19
WHO HQ
Guidance issued in ten areas, including: National coordination, risk communication, public health measures, case management, infection prevention, control, surveillance, laboratory systems, and R&D.
WHO HQ
LOCKDOWN/ STAY-AT-HOME MEASURES
Singapore: First social distancing measures applied
Ministry of Health
"Circuit-breaker" partial-lockdown introduced with closures of schools, workplaces, non-essential services, venues, and attractions.
Ministry of Health News Highlight
Cases per million
Singapore: 23.59
02 Mar, cont.
04 Mar
05 Mar
07 Mar

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

08 Mar

09 Mar

10 Mar

11 Mar

ANNOUNCEMENT

GPMB calls for $8 billion and for G7 and G20 leadership

GPMB
Published: 09 Mar 2020

The Global Preparedness and Monitoring Board (GPMB) calls for an immediate injection of USD 8 billion for the COVID-19 response, and for G7 and G20 leaders to meet.

GPMB

GUIDANCE

COVID-19 prevention and control in schools

UNICEF, WHO, IFRC

UNICEF, WHO, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) publish joint paper on key messages and actions for COVID-19 prevention and control in schools.

UNICEF, *WHO*, *IFRC*

ANNOUNCEMENT

WHO DG announces pandemic

WHO DG

WHO DG announces pandemic: "WHO has been assessing this outbreak around the clock and we are deeply concerned both by the alarming levels of spread and severity, and by the alarming levels of inaction. We have therefore made the assessment that COVID-19 can be characterized as a pandemic".

WHO DG Speech

MASK USAGE

India issues mask guidance

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

India issues guidance outlining where masks should be worn.

Government Guidelines

Cases per million
India: 0.03

LOCKDOWN/ STAY-AT-HOME MEASURES

Italy imposes first national lockdown

Italy
Published: 10 Mar 2020

Expanding on previous local restrictions, Italy announces first nationwide lockdown in an effort to contain spread of COVID-19.

Washington Post

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Four countries implement school closures

Various countries

Pakistan, Peru, Sri Lanka, and the US implement various levels and types of school closures this week.

Pakistan, *Peru*, *Sri Lanka*, *United States*

Cases per million
Pakistan: 0.14
Peru: 0.33
Sri Lanka: 0.28
United States: 4.79

CASES

Spread to 101 countries, cases outside China approach 25,000

80,859 cases in China, 24,727 cases outside China, in 101 countries.

WHO Situation Report

CASES

Italy: Highest case number outside China (9,172)

Italy's lockdown is extended nationwide as it reaches 9,172 cases (the highest outside China), expanding exponentially.

WHO Situation Report

NEWS REPORT

NY Times: "A Fumbled Global Response to the Virus in a Leadership Void"

"While world leaders are at last speaking out about the gravity of the pandemic, their voices are less a choir than a cacophony."

NY Times

CASES

258,728 estimated infections in China

Hao X, Chen S, et al.
Published: 16 Jul 2020

Reconstruction of transmission dynamics of COVID-19 in Wuhan estimated that there were 258,728 infections by 8 March.

Nature

SCIENCE

Severity increases with age

Pan A, Liu L, et al.
Published: 10 Apr 2020

Data from 32,583 Wuhan cases identified between 8 Dec. 2019 and 8 March 2020 showed that severity increased with age and that public health measures were effective in dropping the reproduction rate

JAMA

SCIENCE

Estimates of severity of COVID-19

Verity R, Okell L.C, et al.
Published 30 Mar 2020

Early dynamics of transmission and control of COVID-19: a mathematical modelling study.

Lancet Infectious Diseases

INTERNATIONAL

PUBLICATION
Monitoring and mitigating the secondary impacts of COVID-19

UNICEF

UNICEF presents briefing on *Monitoring and mitigating the secondary impacts of the COVID-19 epidemic on WASH services availability and access.*

UNICEF

MEETING
Ninth meeting of the STAG-IH

WHO STAG-IH

Experts discuss pandemic announcement, epidemiology and laboratory diagnosis updates, R&D Blueprint global meeting update, and solidarity trial.

WHO STAG-IH

GUIDANCE
Human rights in the COVID-19 response

OHCHR

UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissoner publishes guidance on the importance of human rights in the response.

OHCHR

COUNTRY

MASK USAGE
Bhutan recommends mask wearing

Government of Bhutan

Bhutan recommends mask-wearing, the first country in SEAR to do so.

Our World in Data

Cases per million
Bhutan: 1.296

BORDER CONTROL MEASURES
Argentina suspends flights from high-risk areas

President

There is a 30-day suspension of flights from high-risk countries, including all of Europe, Iran, the US, the Republic of Korea, Japan, and China.

La Nacion

Cases per million
Argentina: 0.42

DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY
Argentina expands emergency measures

Ministry of Health

Argentina passes the Decree of Necessity and Urgency, which allows adoption of new health emergency measures.

Government announcement

Cases per million
Argentina: 0.42

DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY
Three countries declare states of emergency

Various countries

India, the United States, and Uruguay declare states of emergency or implement emergency legislation.

India, *United States*, *Uruguay*

Cases per million
India: 0.06
United States: 6.70
Uruguay: 1.15

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

NEWS REPORT
Urgent need for health security funds

"COVID-19 response must be never again" - urgent need for funds for a co-ordinated effort to identify, trial, and make available potential treatments.

Financial Times

CASES
Iran: Second highest (8,042 cases) outside China

Iran has the second highest number of cases outside China with 8,041, surpassing the Republic of Korea.

WHO Situation Report

NEWS REPORT
Nature interviews experts: containment still possible

Wellcome Trust, US CDC, and WHO experts say COVID-19 containment still possible.

Nature News Explainer

11 Mar, cont. — 12 Mar — 13 Mar

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

CASES
108,689 estimated US infections

Perkins TA, Cavany SM, et al.
Published: 21 Aug 2020

Modelling study finds that fewer than 10% of cases were detected due to lack of testing; likely 108,689 infections in the US by 12 March.

PNAS

INTERNATIONAL

ANNOUNCEMENT

WHO, UN Foundation, and partners launch COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund

WHO
Published: 13 Mar 2020

The Solidarity Response Fund is a new mechanism for WHO to receive resources from a broader funding base, including private individuals, and corporations.

WHO

COUNTRY

LOCKDOWN/ STAY-AT-HOME MEASURES

Uruguay requests people to stay at home

President

President asks people to stay in their homes to protect the population.

BMJ

Cases per million
Uruguay: 1.15

LOCKDOWN/ STAY-AT-HOME MEASURES

Iraqi region introduces lockdown/stay-at-home measures

Iraq Kurdish Regional Government

Kurdish region of Iraq placed under curfew, the first area in EMR to impose movement restrictions.

Anadolu Agency

Cases per million
Iraq: 2.511

LOCKDOWN/ STAY-AT-HOME MEASURES

Two countries introduce lockdown/stay at home measures

Governments of Jamaica and Venezuela

Jamaica introduces 2 week quarantine in select communities. Venezuela introduces mandatory stay-at-home measures except for essential reasons, the first countries in AMR to do so.

Jamaica, *Venezuela*

Cases per million
Jamaica: 2.702

DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY

Spain: State of alarm declared

Ministry of the Presidency

State of alarm declared for 15 days.

Government announcement

Cases per million
Spain: 136.69

LOCKDOWN/ STAY-AT-HOME MEASURES

Spain begins lockdown

Prime Minister

Two-week lockdown announced ordering people to stay at home with some exceptions for essential services.

The Guardian

Cases per million
Spain: 136.69

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

13 Mar, cont. — 14 Mar

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

15 Mar

CASES

143 countries, over 72,000 cases

81,048 cases in China, 72,469 cases outside China, in 143 countries.

WHO Situation Report

16 Mar

ACTION PLAN

Risk Communication and Community Engagement Plan

Tool for Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) staff and responders working with national health authorities and others, to develop, implement and monitor an action plan for communicating with the public and engaging communities and partners.

WHO HQ

BORDER CONTROL MEASURES

Four countries implement border restrictions

Various countries

Argentina, Liberia, Peru, and Spain implement various levels of border closures and travel restrictions.

Argentina, *Liberia*, *Peru*, *Spain*

Cases per million
Argentina: 1.24
Liberia: 0.20
Peru: 2.61
Spain: 212.64

SCIENCE

Imperial College publishes mitigation vs. suppression model

Ferguson N, Laydon D, et al.

Influential epidemiological model of the impact of different non-pharmaceutical interventions is published.

Imperial College

COMMENT

COVID-19: Towards controlling of a pandemic

WHO STAG-IH

In a comment to the Lancet, STAG-IH outlines understanding of control activities and emphasizes research gaps that need to be addressed.

Lancet

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Four countries implement school closures

Various countries

Argentina, Germany, India, and Spain implement various levels and types of school closures.

Argentina, *Germany*, *India*, *Spain*

Cases per million
Argentina: 1.24
Germany: 86.80
India: 0.09
Spain: 212.64

17 Mar

MEETING

G7 leaders meet and issue statement

G7
Published: 16 Mar 2020

"By acting together, we will work to resolve the health and economic risks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and set the stage for a strong recovery of strong, sustainable economic growth and prosperity."

G7

BORDER CONTROL MEASURES

India implements border controls

Government of India

Land borders with Myanmar, Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh closed. Land border with Pakistan closed. First country in SEAR to take these measures.

Indian Ministry of Home Affairs

PUBLICATION

Mental health briefing note

IASC

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the highest level humanitarian coordination forum of the UN system, publishes an interim briefing note addressing mental health and psychosocial aspects of the COVID-19 outbreak.

IASC

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

17 Mar, cont.

PUBLICATION

Readiness and response operations in refugee camps

IFRC, IOM, UNHCR, WHO

Group publishes interim guidance on scaling-up COVID-19 outbreak in readiness and response operations in humanitarian situations, including camps and camp-like settings.

IASC

18 Mar

INTERIM GUIDANCE

Mental health considerations

WHO HQ

WHO publishes a series of messages to be used in communications to support mental and psychosocial well-being in different target groups.

WHO HQ

BORDER CONTROL MEASURES

Three countries implement border restrictions

Various countries

India, Singapore, and Sri Lanka implement various levels of border closures and travel restrictions during this week.

India, *Singapore*, *Sri Lanka*

Cases per million
India: 0.08
Singapore: 38.63
Sri Lanka: 2.38

SCIENCE

Lopinavir-Ritonavir does not help severe COVID-19

Cao B, Wang Y et al.
Published: 07 May 2020

A randomized control trial of Lopinavir-Ritonavir in adults hospitalized with severe COVID-19 shows no benefit observed with this treatment beyond standard care.

New England Journal of Medicine

Pre-print published 18 March, final version published 7 May.

ACTION

Launch of SOLIDARITY trial for treatments of COVID-19

WHO
Published: 18 Mar 2020

One of the largest international randomized trials for COVID-19 treatments starts, enrolling almost 12,000 patients in 500 hospital sites in over 30 countries.

WHO

DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY

Four countries declare states of emergency

Various countries

Brazil, Liberia, Peru, and Russia declare states of emergency or implement emergency legislation during this week.

Brazil, *Liberia*, *Peru*, *Russia*

Cases per million
Brazil: 1.36
Liberia: 0.59
Peru: 1.30
Russia: 1.36

NEWS REPORT

Worldwide shortage of COVID-19 test agents

Worldwide shortage of COVID-19 test agents plagues health systems – even as infections surpass 200,000.

Health Policy Watch

LOCKDOWN/ STAY-AT-HOME MEASURES

Five countries introduce lockdown/stay-at home measures

Various countries

Liberia, Niger, Peru, the Republic of Korea, and the US impose various levels of lockdown or stay-at-home measures during this week.

Liberia, *Niger*, *Peru*, *Republic of Korea*, *United States*

Cases per million
Liberia: 0.59
Peru: 2.61
Republic of Korea: 171.62
United States: 9.70

SCIENCE

Wuhan: Estimating the clinical severity of COVID-19

Wu J, Leung K et al.
Published: 19 Mar 2020

Estimating clinical severity of COVID-19 from transmission dynamics in Wuhan to end Feb 2020 – with symptomatic case fatality rate 1.4%.

Nature Medicine (Letter)

MASK USAGE

Three countries introduce mask usage recommendations/orders

Various countries

Argentina, China, and Viet Nam introduce recommendations or orders around mask usage during this week.

Argentina, *China*, *Viet Nam*

Cases per million
Argentina: 1.00
China: 56.32
Viet Nam: 0.63

INTERNATIONAL

REPORT

Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19

UN

The UN publishes a global solidarity document on responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19.

UN

COUNTRY

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Six countries implement school closures

Various countries

Egypt, Liberia, Nigeria, Sweden, Thailand, and Uruguay implement various levels and types of school closures during during this week.

Egypt, *Liberia*, *Nigeria*, *Sweden*, *Thailand*, *Uruguay*

Cases per million
Egypt: 1.08
Liberia: 0.59
Nigeria: 0.04
Sweden: 125.26
Thailand: 3.04
Uruguay: 2.30

LOCKDOWN/ STAY-AT-HOME MEASURES

Lesotho introduces lockdown/ stay-at home measures

Government of Lesotho

Lesotho introduces measures mandating people to stay at home except for "extreme circumstances," the first in AFR to do so.

Our World in Data

BORDER CONTROL MEASURES

Six countries implement border restrictions

Various countries

Egypt, Germany, New Zealand, Niger, the Republic of Korea, and Sweden implement various levels of border closures and travel restrictions.

Egypt, *Germany*, *New Zealand*, *Niger*, *Republic of Korea*, *Sweden*

Cases per million
Egypt: 2.30
Germany: 182.85
New Zealand: 5.81
Republic of Korea: 167.06
Sweden: 153.77

LOCKDOWN/ STAY-AT-HOME MEASURES

Two countries introduce lockdown/stay-at home measures

Various countries

Argentina and Fiji introduce various levels of lockdown or stay-at-home measures.

Argentina, *Fiji*

Cases per million
Argentina: 2.15
Fiji: 1.12

LOCKDOWN/ STAY-AT-HOME MEASURES

Sri Lanka introduces lockdown/ stay-at-home measures

Government of Sri Lanka

Lockdown-style curfew imposed for whole country, with recommendations that people stay in their homes. First country in the region to do so.

Economy Next

Cases per million
Sri Lanka: 2.8

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

18 Mar, cont. — 19 Mar

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

20 Mar

PUBLICATION

A gender lens on COVID-19

UNFPA

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) publishes technical brief on protecting sexual and reproductive health and rights, and promoting gender equality.

UNFPA

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Four countries implement school closures

Various countries

Fiji, Niger, Uganda, and the UK implement various levels and types of school closures.

Fiji, *Niger*, *Uganda*, *United Kingdom*

Cases per million
Fiji: 1.12
Niger: 0.04
United Kingdom: 114.77

CASES

Europe becomes epicenter

Europe (104,591 cases) surpasses Western Pacific (93,349 cases) as epicenter.

WHO Situation Report

CASES

Iran: 916,000 cumulative cases estimated

Ghaffarzadegan N, Rhamandad H
Published: 06 Jul 2020

Simulation modelling estimates 916,000 cumulative cases in Iran by 20 March. 19,644 cases were reported by this date.

System Dynamics Review

21 Mar

ACTION

WHO and social media companies launch Health Alert messaging service

WHO
Published: 20 Mar 2020

WHO launches dedicated COVID-19 public health messaging services in Arabic, English, French, Hindi, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese with WhatsApp and Facebook.

WHO

CASES

Spain: Second highest outside China (19,980 cases)

Spain surpasses Iran to become the country with the second highest cases outside China, after Italy.

WHO Situation Report

INTERIM GUIDANCE

Laboratory testing strategy recommendations

WHO HQ

WHO publishes recommendations for laboratory testing strategy. It describes the strategic use of diagnostic tests in different scenarios and includes how to rationalize testing when testing capacity/reagents are lacking.

WHO HQ

BORDER CONTROL MEASURES

Three countries implement border restrictions

Various countries

Mexico, Pakistan, and Uganda implement various levels of border closures and travel restrictions.

Mexico, *Pakistan*, *Uganda*

Cases per million
Mexico: 1.95
Pakistan: 3.51
Uganda: 0.02

INTERIM GUIDANCE

Infection prevention in long-term care

WHO HQ

WHO publishes interim guidance on infection prevention and control in long-term care facilities to prevent spread within and outside the facility.

WHO HQ

22 Mar

BORDER CONTROL MEASURES

Four countries implement border restrictions

Various countries

India, Spain, Uruguay, and Viet Nam implement various levels of border closures and travel restrictions.

India, *Spain*, *Uruguay*, *Viet Nam*

Cases per million
India: 0.29
Spain: 615.30
Uruguay: 45.48
Viet Nam: 1.16

CASES

300,000 cases globally

292,142 cases globally, driven by Europe (151,293 cases) and Western Pacific (94,787 cases).

WHO Situation Report

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

23 Mar

PUBLICATION

Guidance on social distancing

ECDC

The European Center for Disease Prevention and Control publishes a technical report on considerations relating to social distancing measures in response to COVID-19.

ECDC

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Five countries implement school closures

Various countries

Mexico, Mozambique, New Zealand, Russia, and the Republic of Korea implement various levels and types of school closures.

Mexico, *Mozambique*, *New Zealand*, *Russia*, *Republic of Korea*

Cases per million
Mexico: 2.85
Mozambique: 0.03
New Zealand: 21.15
Russia: 3.00
Republic of Korea: 174.78

LOCKDOWN/ STAY-AT-HOME MEASURES

Two countries introduce lockdown/stay-at home measures

Various countries

Pakistan and the UK introduce various levels of lockdown or stay-at-home measures.

Pakistan, *United Kingom*

Cases per million
Pakistan: 4.40
United Kingom: 187.73

24 Mar

ANNOUNCEMENT

Japan postpones Summer Olympics

International Olympic Committee

The President of the International Olympic Committee and the Prime Minister of Japan hold a conference call where they decide to postpone the Summer Olympics until "no later than summer 2021".

International Olympic Committee

MASK USAGE

Namibia recommends mask wearing

Government of Namibia

Namibia recommends mask wearing, the first in AFR to do so.

Our World in Data

Cases per million
Namibia: 2.755

SCIENCE

Seroprevalence in Wuhan and outside approximately 3%

Xu X, Sun J, et al. Published: 05 Jun 2020

Seroprevalence in Wuhan ranged from 3.2% and 3.8% during 9 March-10 April, and anywhere from 1.3% and 3.6% in two cities outside Wuhan but within Hubei.

Nature Medicine

25 Mar

INTERIM GUIDANCE

Guidance for refugee and migrant health

EURO

WHO Regional Office for Europe (EURO) publishes interim guidance for refugee and migrant health in relation to COVID-19.

EURO

LOCKDOWN/ STAY-AT-HOME MEASURES

Four countries introduce lockdown/stay-at-home measures

Various countries

Egypt, India, New Zealand, and Sweden introduce various levels of lockdown or stay-at-home measures.

Egypt, *India*, *New Zealand*, *Sweden*

Cases per million
Egypt: 4.46
India: 0.48
New Zealand: 42.51
Sweden: 268.53

SCIENCE

Modelling shows measures can control spread of COVID-19

Prem K, Liu Y et al.
Published: 25 Mar 2020

Using computational models of spread in Wuhan, control measures are found to halt the pandemic, but premature lifting will lead to an earlier second peak.

The Lancet Public Health

ACTION

UN begins fundraising drive

UN

UN launches a USD 2 billion coordinated global humanitarian response plan to fight COVID-19 in vulnerable countries.

UN OCHA

BORDER CONTROL MEASURES

Four countries implement border restrictions

Various countries

Brazil, China, Nigeria, and Russia implement various levels of border closures and travel restrictions during this week.

Brazil, *China*, *Nigeria*, *Russia*

Cases per million
Brazil: 16.08
China: 56.97
Nigeria: 0.19
Russia: 7.10

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY

Five countries declare states of emergency

Various countries

New Zealand, Niger, Pakistan, Thailand, and the UK declare states of emergency, or implement emergency legislation during this week.

New Zealand, *Niger*, *Pakistan*, *Thailand*, *United Kingdom*

Cases per million
New Zealand: 106.59
Niger: 3.73
Pakistan: 8.49
Thailand: 14.97
United Kingdom: 262.84

LOCKDOWN/ STAY-AT-HOME MEASURES

Six countries introduce lockdown/stay-at home measures

Various countries

Brazil, Germany, Niger, Russia, Thailand, and Uganda introduce various levels of lockdown or stay-at-home measures during this week.

Brazil, *Germany*, *Niger*, *Russia*, *Thailand*, *Uganda*

Cases per million
Brazil: 10.57
Germany: 296.87
Niger: 0.41
Russia: 8.66
Thailand: 14.97
Uganda: 0.20

SCHOOL CLOSURES

US close all public schools

Subnational actors in the United States

All public school buildings in the US are closed by this date.

Education Week

Cases per million
United States: 207.97

BORDER CONTROL MEASURES

Three countries implement border restrictions

Various countries

Fiji, Thailand, and Uruguay implement various levels of border closures and travel restrictions.

Fiji, *Thailand*, *Uruguay*

Cases per million
Fiji: 5.58
Thailand: 14.97
Uruguay: 68.51

PUBLICATION

Origins of SARS-CoV-2

WHO HQ

All available evidence suggests SARS-CoV-2 has a natural animal origin and is not a manipulated or constructed virus. Most probable ecological reservoir is bats.

WHO HQ

INTERIM GUIDANCE

Surveillance guidance using GISRS

WHO HQ

WHO publishes interim guidance on operational considerations for leveraging influenza surveillance systems such as the Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System to incorporate COVID-19 testing.

WHO HQ

25 Mar, cont.

26 Mar

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

26 Mar, cont.

INTERIM GUIDANCE

Guiding principles for immunization activities

WHO HQ

WHO publishes guiding principles for immunization activities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

WHO HQ

MEETING

G20 leaders meet and issue statement

G20
Published: 26 Mar 2020

"We ask the WHO, in cooperation with relevant organizations, to assess gaps in pandemic preparedness and report to a joint meeting of Finance and Health Ministers in the coming months, with a view to establish a global initiative on pandemic preparedness and response."

Government of the UK

27 Mar

INTERIM GUIDANCE

Joint family-friendly workplace guidance

UNICEF, ILO, UN Women

UNICEF, the International Labour Organization (ILO), and UN Women publish recommendations for family-friendly policies and other good workplace practices in the context of COVID-19.

UNICEF, ILO, UN Women

28 Mar

CASES

Italy, US: Highest number of cases, surpassing China

Italy reaches 86,498 cases, and US reaches 85,228 cases, surpassing China (82,213 cases) for the first time.

WHO Situation Report

SCIENCE

Loss of smell and taste common with COVID-19

Giacomelli A, Pezatti L, et al.
Published: 26 Mar 2020

A cross-sectional study of self-reported olfactory and taste disorders (OTDs) in patients with SARS-CoV-2, finds that loss of smell and taste is fairly frequent and may precede the onset of full-blown clinical disease.

Clinical Infectious Diseases

INTERNATIONAL

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

CASES

US has world's highest number of cases

The US becomes the world's epicenter, surpassing Italy, with 103,321 cases.

WHO Situation Report

CASES

Americas become number two epicenter, 635,000 cases globally

634,813 cases globally driven by Europe (361,031 cases) and Region of Americas (120,792 cases). The Americas surpasses Western Pacific.

WHO Situation Report

NEWS REPORT

UN warns of impact on students

As one of several announcements about the socio-economic impact of COVID-19, the UN warns that "now nearly 1.5 billion children - or 87% of Earth's student population - whose schools have closed because of the novel coronavirus pandemic."

Washington Post

SCIENCE

Estimates of COVID-19 fatality ratio published

Verity R, Okell L, et al.
Published: 30 Mar 2020

Estimated overall infection fatality ratio for China is 0.66%, with an increasing profile with age.

The Lancet Infectious Diseases

SCIENCE

European analysis of public health interventions

Flaxman S, Mishra S, et al.
Published: 30 Mar 2020

Non-pharmaceutical interventions are found to be effective to reduce transmission, but take two to three weeks to demonstrate impact.

Imperial College

29 Mar

30 Mar

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

CASES

11-fold under-detection in New York State

Rosenberg ES, Tesoriero JM, et al.
Published: 17 Jun 2020

Detected cases compared to seroprevalence were 8.9%, suggesting an 11-fold under-detection of cases in New York State. The number of infection-experienced adults were estimated to be 2,139,300.

Annals of Epidemiology

INTERNATIONAL

MEETING

13th meeting of the STAG-IH

WHO STAG-IH

Following meetings on 19, 24, and 27 March, STAG-IH experts continue to discuss country situations, research areas, and exit strategies.

WHO STAG-IH

COUNTRY

REAL-TIME EVIDENCE

CASES

COVID-19 sweeps the globe

WHO

WHO reports 750,890 COVID-19 cases globally, including 57,610 in the previous 24 hours, along with 36,405 deaths. The US reports the highest number of cases with 140,640. Italy reports the highest number of deaths with 11,591.

WHO Situation Report

31 Mar

RETROSPECTIVE EVIDENCE

CASES

Lockdown led to rapid reduction of transmission in New Zealand

Geoghegan JL, Ren X, et al.
Published: 11 Dec 2020

Genomic epidemiology reveals rapid reduction of transmission within one week of lockdown in New Zealand. Re decreased from 7 to 0.2.

Nature Communications