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California, Southwest face new coronavirus woes



Inside C2

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Beijing district in 'wartime emergency' after virus cluster at major food market



People are wearing face masks inside the Jingshen seafood market which has been closed for business after new coronavirus infections were detected, in Beijing, China, June 12, 2020. REUTERS/Thomas Peter

BEIJING (Reuters) - A Beijing district put itself on a "wartime" footing and the capital banned tourism and sports events on Saturday after a cluster of novel coronavirus infections centred around a major wholesale market sparked fears of a new wave of COVID-19.

Forty-five people out of 517 tested with throat swabs at the Xinfadi market in the city's southwestern Fengtai district had tested positive for the coronavirus, Chu Junwei, a district official, told a briefing.

None were showing symptoms of COVID-19, he said, but added that 11 neighbourhoods in the vicinity of the market, which claims to be the largest agricultural wholesale market in Asia, had been locked down with 24-hour guards put in place.

"In accordance with the principle of putting the safety of the masses and health first, we have adopted lockdown measures for the Xinfadi market and surrounding neighbourhoods," Chu said.

The district is in a "wartime emergency mode," he added.

The closure of the market and new restrictions come as concerns grow about a second wave of the pandemic, which has infected more than 7.66 million people worldwide and killed more than 420,000.

They also underline how even in countries which have had great success in curbing the spread of the virus, clusters can sometimes easily arise.

The entire Xinfadi market was shut down at 3 a.m. on Saturday (1900 GMT on Friday), after two men working at a meat research centre who had recently visited the market were reported to have the virus. It was not immediately clear how they had been infected.

On Saturday, market entrances were blocked and police stood guard. Beijing authorities had earlier halted beef and mutton trading at the market and had closed other wholesale markets around the city.

They plan for more than 10,000 people at the Xinfadi market to take nucleic acid tests to detect coronavirus infections.

According to the Xinfadi website, more than 1,500 tonnes of seafood, 18,000 tonnes of vegetables and 20,000 tonnes of fruit are traded at the market daily.

TOURIST SITES CLOSE

A city spokesman told the briefing that all six COVID-19 patients confirmed in Beijing on Friday had visited the Xinfadi market. The capital will suspend sports events and tourists from other parts of China, effective immediately, he said.

Beijing's Yonghe temple and National Theatre also announced they would close from Saturday, and the city government said it had dropped plans to reopen schools on Monday for students in grades one through three because of the new cases.

One person at an agricultural market in the city's northwestern Haidian district also tested positive for the coronavirus, Chu said.

Highlighting the new sense of alarm within the city, health authorities visited the home of a Reuters reporter in Beijing's Dongcheng district on Saturday to ask whether she had visited the Xinfadi market, which is 15 km (9 miles) away. They said the visit was part of patrols Dongcheng was conducting.

And following reports in state-run newspapers that the coronavirus was discovered on chopping boards used for imported salmon at the market, major supermarkets in Beijing removed salmon from their shelves overnight.

That concern also spread to other cities, with a major agricultural wholesale market in Chengdu, the capital of the southwestern province of Sichuan, saying it would remove salmon products from its shelves from Saturday.

In Nanjing, capital of the eastern province of Jiangsu, a local association of restaurants said it would halt the serving of



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Risk of new lockdowns rises with fear of second COVID-19 wave

LONDON/BRUSSELS (Reuters) - Fears of a second wave of COVID-19 infections shut six major food markets in Beijing on Friday, while India, which opened up this week, recorded a record daily increase and half a dozen U.S. states said their hospital beds were filling up fast.

FILE PHOTO: People wearing face masks queue to enter a reopened Primark store as Madrid eases lockdown restrictions following the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, in Madrid, Spain, June 11, 2020. REUTERS/Susana Vera/

Health officials worldwide have expressed concerns in recent days that some countries grappling with the devastating economic impact of lockdowns may lift restrictions too swiftly, and that the coronavirus could spread during mass anti-racism protests.

“We must be ready to roll back relaxation of measures if needed,” the European Union’s health commissioner Stella Kyriakides said after urging its 27 members to plough ahead with testing the population as they reopen schools and businesses.

In China, where the new coronavirus originated, two new cases of COVID-19, the disease it causes, were recorded in the capital. Authorities closed part or all of six big wholesale food markets which the two men had recently visited but it was not known how they had become infected.

RELATED COVERAGE

Factbox: Global surge in coronavirus cases raise fears about second wave

India opened most public transport, offices and malls this week after nearly 70 days even though health officials said it was weeks away from flattening the rising infection curve.

The official death toll, at 8,498, is relatively small, but the health ministry said registered cases rose by 10,956 on Friday, a record, with many in Delhi, Mumbai and



Chennai.

Syed Ahmed Bukhari, the head of Delhi’s Jama Masjid, one of India’s biggest mosques, ordered a halt to congregations until the end of the month.

“What is the point of visiting mosques at a time when the virus is spreading so fast?” he said.

FIRST WAVE NOT OVERCOME

In Turkey, the top medical association said the easing of restrictions on June 1 had come too soon, although the daily death toll as fallen in recent weeks to about 20.

“There is talk of when the second wave will hit, but we have not yet been able to overcome the first wave,” Cavit Isik Yavuz, part of the coronavirus research team at the Turkish Medics Association said.

While new infections are slowing in most of Europe, health experts see a moderate to high risk that post-lockdown rises may warrant new restrictions. The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) predicted a moderate acceleration across Europe in coming weeks, which could place healthcare systems under stress if not checked rapidly. Government control measures could check and reverse upward trends within two to three weeks, it said.

Stay Safe!

BUSINESS

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U.N. Warns Of Global Mental Health Crisis Due To COVID-19 Pandemic



Coronavirus could cause a global mental health crisis, the United Nations warns.

KEY POINTS

The United Nations has warned that coronavirus could cause a global mental health crisis.

The U.N. report highlighted those vulnerable to mental distress, including children and young people, and healthcare workers who see patients dying from COVID-19.

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

LONDON (Reuters) - A mental illness crisis is looming as millions of people worldwide are surrounded by death and disease and forced into isolation, poverty and anxiety by the pandemic of COVID-19, United Nations health experts said on Thursday.

“The isolation, the fear, the uncertainty, the economic turmoil - they all cause or could cause psychological distress,” said Devora Kestel, director of the World Health Organization’s (WHO) mental health department.

Presenting a U.N. report and policy guidance on COVID-19 and mental health, Kestel said an upsurge in the number and severity of mental illnesses is likely, and governments should put the issue “front and centre” of their responses.

“The mental health and wellbeing of whole societies have been severely impacted by this crisis and are a priority to

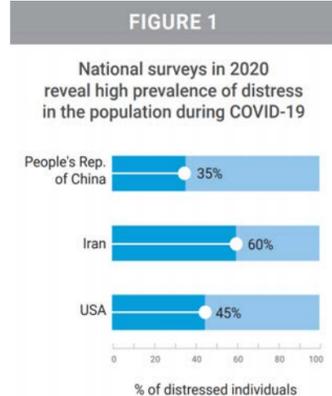
be addressed urgently,” she told reporters at a briefing.



FILE PHOTO: “Grief holds her covered face against the shoulder of History and weeps in mourning” as depicted at the Peace Monument in front of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, U.S., March 23, 2020. (Photo/Reuters/File Photo)

The report highlighted several regions and sections of societies as vulnerable to mental distress - including children and

young people isolated from friends and school, healthcare workers who are seeing thousands of patients infected with and dying from the new coronavirus. Emerging studies and surveys are already showing COVID-19’s impact on mental health globally. Psychologists say children are anxious and increases in cases of depression and anxiety have been recorded in several countries. Domestic violence is rising, and health workers are reporting an increased need for psychological support. Reuters last week reported from interviews with doctors and nurses in the United States who said either they or their colleagues had experienced a combination of panic, anxiety, grief, numbness, irritability, insomnia and nightmares.



Outside of the health sector, the WHO report said many people are distressed by the immediate health impacts and the consequences of physical isolation, while many others are afraid of infection, dying, and losing family members. Millions of people are facing economic turmoil, having lost or being at risk of losing their income and livelihoods, it added. And frequent misinformation and rumors about the pandemic and deep uncertainty about how long it will last are making people feel anxious and hopeless about the future.

It outlined action points for policy-makers to aim “to reduce immense suffering among hundreds of millions of people

and mitigate long-term social and economic costs to society”. These included redressing historic under-investment in psychological services, providing “emergency mental health” via remote therapies such as tele-counseling for frontline health workers, and working proactively with people known to have depression and anxiety, and with those at high risk of domestic violence and acute impoverishment.



Domestic violence is rising, and health workers are reporting an increased need for psychological support. Reuters last week reported from interviews with doctors and nurses in the United States who said either they or their colleagues had experienced a combination of panic, anxiety, grief, numbness, irritability, insomnia and nightmares. Outside of the health sector, the WHO report said many people are distressed by the immediate health impacts and the consequences of physical isolation, while many others are afraid of infection, dying, and losing family members. Millions of people are facing economic turmoil, having lost or being at risk of losing their income and livelihoods, it added. And frequent misinformation and rumours about the pandemic and deep uncertainty about how long it will last are making people feel anxious and hopeless about the future.

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selling for frontline health workers, and working proactively with people known to have depression and anxiety, and with those at high risk of domestic violence and acute impoverishment. (Courtesy weforum.org)



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Editor's Choice



A woman cries as the horse-drawn carriage carrying the casket containing the body of George Floyd, whose death in Minneapolis police custody has sparked nationwide protests against racial inequality, pass by in Pearland, Texas, June 9, 2020. REUTERS/Carlos Barria



Senegalese kneel during a Black Lives Matter gathering following the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis police custody, in Dakar, Senegal June 9. REUTERS/ Zohra Bensemra



Tasmina, 4, adjusts her protective face mask as she waits with her family for a train at a railway station in Karachi, Pakistan June 9. REUTERS/Akhtar Soomro



Demonstrators hold placards as they protest for the removal of a statue of British imperialist Cecil Rhodes on the outside of Oriel College in Oxford, Britain, June 9. REUTERS/Hannah McKay



Belgian's oldest former general practitioner Alfons Leempoels, 103, poses next to a start line intending to walk the equivalent of a marathon in his garden to raise money for scientists researching the coronavirus in Rotselaar, Belgium June 9....



Quarantine millennials face bedtimes and old rules as they move home



A boy looks out of a bus window as teachers prepare to board government chartered buses to go back to schools in countryside towns scheduled to reopen next week, in Dakar, Senegal. REUTERS/Zohra Bensemra



A boy peers from a car in front of a Cuban flag displayed for the arrival of the Cuban medical brigade of the Henry Reeve Contingent from Lombardy, Italy, amid concerns about the spread of the coronavirus, in Havana, Cuba, June 8. REUTERS/Alexandre...

Genetic Testing Firm Shows Specific Blood Types Are Less Likely To Contract COVID-19



The research found that individuals with type O blood are between 9 per cent and 18 per cent less likely than individuals with other blood types to have tested positive for the virus. (Photo/ Handout)

KEY POINTS

The company in April launched a study using the millions of profiles in its DNA database to shed light on the role genetics play in the disease. Preliminary results from more than 750,000 participants suggests type O blood is especially protective against the coronavirus

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Research from genetic testing giant 23andMe found differences in a gene that influences a person's blood type can affect a person's susceptibility to Covid-19. Scientists have been looking at genetic factors to try to determine why some people who contract the new coronavirus experience no symptoms, while others become gravely ill. In April, 23andMe launched a study that sought to use the millions of profiles in its DNA database to shed light on the role genetics play in the disease. Preliminary results from more than 750,000 participants suggests type O blood is especially protective against Sars-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, the company said on Monday. The findings echo other research that

has indicated a link between variations in the ABO gene and Covid-19. Many other groups, including 23andMe competitor Ancestry, are combing the genome to help make sense of the virus. It is known that factors such as age and underlying health conditions can determine how people fare once they've contracted Covid-19. But those factors alone don't explain the wide diversity of symptoms, or why some people contract the disease and others don't. Studying the genetics of the people who are more susceptible to Sars-CoV-2 could help identify and protect those more at risk, as well as help speed treatment and drug development. Several other studies looking at both severity of illness and susceptibility to disease have also suggested blood type plays a role.



A researcher works in a lab at Singapore's Duke-NUS Medical School, which is developing a way to track genetic changes that speed testing of vaccines. (Photo: Reuters)

"There have also been some reports of links between Covid-19, blood clotting, and cardiovascular disease," said Adam Auton, lead researcher on the 23andMe study. "These reports provided some hints about which genes might be relevant."

The 23andMe study, which looked at susceptibility rather than severity of illness, included 10,000 participants who told the company they had Covid-19. The research found that individuals with type O blood are between 9 per cent and 18 per cent less likely than individuals with other blood types to have tested positive for the virus. However, there was little difference in susceptibility among other blood types, the study found.

When the researchers adjusted the data to account for factors like age and pre-existing illnesses, as well as when it restricted the data to only those with high probability of exposure like health care workers, the findings were the same. Auton said that while this evidence is compelling, there is still a long way to go.



"It's early days; even with these sample sizes, it might not be enough to find genetic associations," he said. "We're not the only group looking at this, and

ultimately the scientific community may need to pool their resources to really address questions surrounding the links between genetics and Covid-19." Research published last week prior to peer review suggested blood type may play a role in the severity of patients' reactions to Sars-CoV-2. That study looked at the genes of more than 1,600 patients in Italy and Spain who experienced respiratory failure and found that having type A blood was linked to a 50 per cent increase in the likelihood a patient would require a ventilator. An earlier Chinese study turned up similar results regarding a person's susceptibility to Covid-19. (Courtesy <https://www.scmp.com/>)

Related

How your blood type could influence your risk of getting COVID-19

Some people are more at risk of getting COVID-19. More men seem to get the virus than women. People between 30 and 79 years old seem to get the virus more than people in their 20s. And people in their 20s get it more than teens and children. All that said, there's still a lot we don't know about the virus and risk factors, which is why researchers are working around the clock to get this virus figured out. And the good news is, they're uncovering more information every day. But some of the information that's coming to light is surprising.

China shows that people with type A blood have a significantly higher risk of COVID-19 than people with other blood types.

The study included data from 2,173 people with COVID-19 who were admitted to three hospitals in Wuhan and Shenzhen. Researchers looked at blood type distribution among the general population in those areas and compared it to blood type distribution among people with COVID-19. Here's what they found. People with type A blood had the highest risk. People with type B blood had the second-highest risk. People with type AB blood had the third-highest risk. And people with type O blood had the lowest risk.



Now, this study is preliminary. It hasn't been peer-reviewed, and it's far from the last word on the matter. But it appears that having type A blood could put you at an elevated risk for COVID-19. And actually, the connection between blood type and viral susceptibility has been demonstrated before. Blood type is determined by the antigens (molecules) on the surface of blood cells. Certain viruses require certain antigens to latch on to. Norovirus, the virus that causes stomach flu, is one example. It affects people with type B blood less because that blood doesn't have the antigens it needs to do its dirty work. There may be something similar happening with COVID-19, but it's far too early to know for sure. (Courtesy <https://easy-healthoptions.com/>)



People with this blood type may have a bigger risk

A recent study from researchers in

Kelsey-Seybold is now scheduling **VIRTUAL** and **IN-PERSON** appointments!

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