

COVID-19: It Hasn't Been Spreading to Health Care Workers in Hong Kong and Singapore

SARS-CoV-2 (virus that causes COVID-19) just doesn't spread that easily. How do we know that?

- In Singapore they checked 30 health care workers treating COVID-19 patients. They looked for virus on their goggles, N95 masks, and shoes. They never found any virus. Ong SWX et al. **Absence of contamination of personal protective equipment (PPE)** by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol 2020 DOI: 10.1017/ice.2020.91
- Hong Kong reported experience of health care workers exposed to 42 COVID-19 patients. It turned out that, for 6 of the patients, they failed to recognize the possibility of COVID-19 and initially took **no special precautions**. 413 health care workers were exposed to these 6 patients before the patients were put in airborne infection isolation rooms. Eleven of the health care workers had unprotected close contact. **No spread of SARS-CoV-2** was found. One nurse spent 63 minutes collecting specimens while wearing personal protection equipment to protect her from airborne infection; she did not acquire SARS-CoV-2. Cheng VCC et al. Escalating Infection Control Response to the Rapidly Evolving Epidemiology of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) due to SARS-CoV-2 in Hong Kong. Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol 2020(Mar), pp. 1-24. [DOI: 10.1017/ice.2020.58](https://doi.org/10.1017/ice.2020.58)
- When we are doing an aerosol-generating procedure (like intubation) on a COVID-19 patient, we have staff wear special personal protective equipment. However, for a patient in Singapore, they did one of those procedures on a patient. They hadn't recognized the patient as having COVID-19. They didn't use special personal protective equipment. They just used ordinary surgical masks. Results: 41 health care workers were exposed while **wearing just ordinary surgical masks. There was no spread of SARS-CoV-2.** Ng K et al. COVID-19 and the Risk to Health Care Workers: A Case Report. Ann Intern Med. 2020. DOI: 10.7326/L20-0175

What does this mean? Follow infection prevention rules. They are here to protect you. They work.