

Short comment on COVID-19 pandemic in Mongolia

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The Situation of COVID-19 in Mongolia

Mongolia is located between Russia to the north and China to the south, where it neighbors the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. The total population in Mongolia is about 3.3 million and nearly half of the people live in the capital, Ulaanbaatar, and in other provincial centers. About two-thirds of the total population is under age 30, 36% of whom are under 14 [1]. It is imperative for Mongolia to take COVID-19 seriously because of its vulnerability. The rate of infection of COVID-19 pose a great threat to Mongolia medically, economically, and socially. The first case of COVID-19 in Mongolia confirmed on March 10, was a French company employee who traveled to Mongolia from Russia. As of May 18, 2020, there have been no confirmed cases of community transmission and there are 1623 people in quarantine [2]; however, the numbers are expected to grow as Mongolians are expected to return home from abroad. Between March 10 and March 18, 2020, 140 cases were determined with COVID-19. Recovery was found in 24 patients. No deaths were described. All cases were imported by other countries. No local cases were diagnosed so far. The majority of cases (about 80%) were university students, who returned from overseas. They were often healthy and with no other comorbidities. 5 children (aged 8-16) and 2 pregnant women were confirmed for COVID-19. About 28% of cases mild or with no symptoms were present, 50% were moderate, and 21% of cases were described as severe [2]. Government strategies for combating COVID-19 were further described in detail. All schools and kindergartens starting from January 25 were closed. The closures were originally intended to last a month but were later extended to May 31. All classes were conducted via TV and the internet. All public events including conferences, sports, and festivals have been cancelled across the country, while all educational institutes are to remain closed until 31 May. All sport clubs, night clubs, karaoke are closed and only restaurants, stores close at 22:00 pm. Stores and public places did serve if a person didn't wear a mask. The government closed the border with China and all air traffic was stopped. All passengers who arrived to Mongolia on special chartered flights from other countries were screened and stay into a 21-day quarantine. The national holiday Tsagaan Sar, the Mongolian lunar new year was cancelled. A readiness for COVID-19 transmission were prepared, all stages of hospitals preparing for medicine, medical staffs and other supplies were prepared. For health emergency preparedness, 2 days of simulation exercise was introduced.

As a developing country, the government took various actions to combat COVID-19 successfully. All imported cases were under control. But because of the expectation of more people returning from overseas, it's to date still a great threat to our population. The economic situation is getting worse because of all kinds of lockdown.

Reference

1. National statistical office of Mongolia, 2020 [Internet]. Available from: <https://www.en.nso.mn/>
2. Daily news of Mongolian health ministry. May 18, 2020.

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