Aerosol transmission is also possible in case of protracted exposure to elevated aerosol concentrations in closed spaces. This is why guidelines recommend that healthcare workers treating patients take personal protection precautions.

Symptomatic people are the most frequent source of COVID-19 spread. The possibility of transmission before symptoms develop seems to be infrequent, although it cannot be excluded.

Moreover, there are suggestions that individuals who remain asymptomatic could transmit the virus.

As with other respiratory pathogens, including flu and rhinovirus, the transmission is believed to occur through respiratory droplets from coughing and sneezing.

Later, human-to-human transmission emerged.

This is why the use of isolation has become the best way to contain this epidemic.

Analysis of data related to the spread of SARS-CoV-2 in China seems to indicate that close contact between individuals is necessary. The spread is primarily limited to family members, healthcare professionals, and other close contacts.

Based on data from the first cases in Wuhan and investigations conducted by the China CDC and local CDCs, the incubation time could be generally within 3 to 7 days and up to 2 weeks as the longest time from infection to symptoms was 12.5 days (95% CI, 9.2 to 18).

This data also showed that this novel epidemic doubled about every seven days, whereas the basic reproduction number (R0 - R naught) is 2.2. In other words, on average, each patient transmits the infection to an additional 2.2 individuals.

Viral RNA levels appear to be higher soon after symptom onset compared with later in the illness. This raises the possibility that transmission might be more likely in the earlier stage of infection, but additional data are needed to confirm this hypothesis.

SARS-CoV-2 RNA has been detected in blood and stool specimens. Live virus has been cultured from stool in some cases, but according to a joint WHO-China report, fecal-oral transmission did not appear to be a significant factor in the spread of infection.

References available on request

It must be emphasized that this information is the result of the first reports. Thus, further studies are needed to understand the mechanisms of transmission, the incubation times and the clinical course, and the duration of infectivity.

“Disclaimer drawn up based on the best available evidence at the time, but may be subject to change.”

The first cases of the CoVID-19 disease were linked to direct exposure to the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market of Wuhan, and animal-to-human transmission was presumed as the main mechanism.