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To worry or not to worry: Neocov variant

08 February 2022 | News

The Neocov variant can turn things upside down for the entire world, however, it is too premature to comment



As the world is seeing a decline in Omicron variant and on the verge of getting back to normalcy, Wuhan scientists have detected NeoCov coronavirus among bats in South Africa. The revelation has sent shockwaves globally as the memories of lockdown come to the fore. So, what is this Neocov variant and what type of threat does it pose to humans? NeoCov happens to be a misnomer as nothing has been proved so far on its relation as a variant of SARs-Cov-2. However, the virus is related to the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) virus.

Dr Sanket Jain, Pulmonologist Consultant, Masina Hospital, Mumbai, “Th NeoCov is very different from SARS-COV virus which is a sarbecovirus and Neocov belongs to marbecovirus which is a different genus. Currently, there is no direct evidence that NeoCov affects the human body, hence more research is required.”

According to Dr Anup R Warrier, Head - Infectious Diseases and Infection Control, Aster DM Healthcare - India Units, the key requirements for early detection of emerging infectious diseases are - Astute clinical input to recognise the unusual pattern of the disease or a clinical syndrome, to focus on establishing the diagnosis and robust and advanced diagnostic capabilities. Hopefully, the advent of COVID and its variants have generated sufficient interest and awareness to make these requirements possible.

Rahul Pandit, Director-Critical Care, Fortis Hospitals Mumbai, Member of National COVID19 Taskforce & Maharashtra’s COVID19 Taskforce opines, “There are many viruses in the world that are yet to be discovered and whose characteristics are not known. We are going through a challenging time and should focus on managing the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. I advise people not to panic, keep their guard up and follow COVID19 appropriate protocols.”

Though the risk factor is less in the case of Neocov, one should not lower the guard as we never know when this variant can come back to its full form with a vengeance.

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