

# China virus: What we know about the fatalities

February 4 2020

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The first fatality from China's new virus would come to represent a common set of traits among most of those who have died of the disease: he was over the age of 60 and in poor health.

Since China reported the emergence of a new coronavirus in December, the SARS-like disease has infected more than 20,400 people and killed 425.

So far, 80 percent of victims were elderly individuals aged 60 or above and 75 percent had pre-existing [health conditions](#), such as diabetes, the National Health Commission said Tuesday.

The mortality rate also stood at 2.1 percent, the commission noted—much lower than the nearly 10 percent who lost their lives to the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2002-2003, when nearly 800 people died worldwide.

Over 97 percent of victims from the [new virus](#) hailed from central Hubei province, where a market that sold [wild animals](#) in the capital city, Wuhan, is believed to be the epicentre of the epidemic.

Chinese government records also list at least five victims under 60—with the youngest a 36-year-old man from Wuhan.

The death rate outside Hubei is 0.16 percent, officials said.

Only two fatalities have been reported outside mainland China so far—a 39-year-old man in Hong Kong who had travelled to Wuhan and a Chinese traveller from Wuhan who died in the Philippines.

China's National Health Commission (NHC) reported on Tuesday that there were 632 recoveries nationwide.

Of the 20,400 confirmed cases, the youngest is a one-month-old baby from the southern region of Guizhou and the oldest is 90.

Here's what we know so far about the deaths:

## **Most victims were over 60**

According to details released by [health](#) officials, the victims to die of the virus were between 36 and 89 years old.

At least five were under the age of 60.

The youngest victim, a 36-year old man from Wuhan, was hospitalised on January 9 and died of heart failure two weeks later, Hubei health authorities said, without offering details on whether he had any pre-existing medical conditions.

Among those who have been discharged from the hospital were younger patients, including a 35-year-old man from Shenzhen, a bustling tech hub in southern Guangdong province.

He was released from the hospital on Thursday, according to the local health commission, as well as the 10-year-old boy who had visited relatives in Wuhan before falling ill.

State-run Beijing satellite TV reported Sunday that a nine-month old girl infected by the virus in Beijing was also recovering.

## **Many had pre-existing health conditions**

Many of those who died from the virus also had pre-existing health issues before contracting the Wuhan disease, such as diabetes and hypertension.

One man, an 86-year-old who was hospitalised on January 9, had surgery for [colon cancer](#) four years prior, on top of suffering from high blood pressure and diabetes.

Another, an 80-year-old woman surnamed Hu, had Parkinson's Disease and more than 20 years of [high blood pressure](#) and diabetes in her medical history.

### **Not all of them had a fever**

Currently, health authorities in several cities are screening passengers for fever at airports, railway stations, and bus terminals.

But not all those who died after being infected reported a fever before being hospitalised, according to the NHC.

A 66-year-old man surnamed Luo reported a "mainly dry cough" but no fever on December 22 before suffering from shortness of breath more than a week later.

By mid-January, Luo required a ventilator to help him breathe.

"A major concern is the range of severity of symptoms this virus is causing," said Dr. Jeremy Farrar, Director of the Wellcome Trust.

"It is clear some people are being affected and are infectious while experiencing only very mild symptoms or possibly without experiencing symptoms at all," he said.

### **Two deaths outside mainland China**

A 39-year-old man in Hong Kong who had the virus died Tuesday, the city's Hospital Authority said.

It was the second outside mainland China after the Philippines reported Sunday the death of a man from Wuhan.

The death of the 39-year-old man in Hong Kong came as the semi-autonomous city closed all but two land crossings with the Chinese mainland to slow the spread of the virus.

Hong Kong media said the man had underlying health issues that complicated his treatment. He had visited Wuhan last month.

Hong Kong has been particularly on edge over the [virus](#) as it has revived memories of the SARS outbreak of 2002-03, which killed nearly 300 people in the financial hub and 349 people in the mainland.

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