**How Deadly Is the New Coronavirus?**

**新冠病毒到底有多致命?**

Scientists are not yet able to say how deadly the new coronavirus really is. As the virus spreads around the world, the percentage of patients dying differs from one place to the next, even within China.

目前科学家们还无法断定新型冠状病毒到底有多致命。随着病毒在世界各地传播，各地患者的死亡比例也有所不同，甚至在中国也是如此。

Other countries are now facing a growing number of cases of the virus that causes the disease, called COVID-19. Yet a low death rate can still mean a lot of victims. So, scientists are trying to understand why death rates are high in some areas and low in others.

现在，别的国家也在出现越来越多的该病毒病例——这种病毒被称为COVID-19。然而，低死亡率无法掩盖其危害之广。为此，科学家们正在试图解析为何有些地区的死亡率高而有些地区的死亡率低。

“You could have bad outcomes with this” until health officials really understand how to control the disease, Bruce Aylward warned this week. Aylward is a doctor and a World Health Organization (WHO) envoy who led a team of scientists just back from China.

本周布鲁斯·艾尔沃德警告道，在卫生部门真正了解如何控制这种疾病之前，“这种情况或会导致很不利的后果”。艾尔沃德是一名医生，也是带领着一个科学家团队刚从中国回来的世界卫生组织特使。

What do we know about the death rate?

对新冠病毒的致死率知多少?

The new coronavirus first appeared in the city of Wuhan, in central China. WHO officials say two percent to four percent of patients there have died. In the rest of China, the rate of death was much lower – only 0.7 percent.

新型冠状病毒最开始出现在中国中部城市武汉。世界卫生组织官方称，百分之二到百分之四的病人死亡。而中国其他地区的死亡率要低得多，只有0.7%。

There is nothing different about the coronavirus from one place to another. Instead, the new strain of virus struck Wuhan fast, before anyone knew what the sickness was. Hospitals were quickly over-crowded. In addition, the first patients were very sick before they visited a doctor or hospital, Aylward noted.

冠状病毒在不同地方并没有什么不一样的。然而，在没有人知道它是何方神圣之前，这种新型病毒就迅速袭击了武汉。医院很快就人满为患。艾尔沃德还特别指出，第一批病人在看医生或去医院之前病情就已经非常严重了。

By the time people were getting sick in other parts of China, health officials were better able to identify less severe cases. So, there were more known infections for each death counted.

当中国其他地区的人开始感染时，卫生部门才能较好地识别症状不那么严重的病例。因此，每报出一个死亡病例，就有更多的已知感染病例。

There is no special treatment for COVID-19, but medical care received as early as possible may help. As the danger of the virus became clear, Chinese hospitals moved quickly to admit patients. At first, hospitals admitted patients, on average, about 15 days after they first reported symptoms of the disease. More recently, the wait time has been cut to about three days.

COVID-19没有特殊的治疗方法，但尽早接受医护治疗或对病情有益。随着病毒的危险性变得日趋明显，中国的医院迅速采取行动接收病人。起初，医院平均在患者首次报告症状15天后收治他们。最近，等待时间被缩短到3天左右。

Aylward expressed anger at people who say the death rate is not that bad because of the large number of mild cases.

某些人认为，存在大量轻微病例所以死亡率并没有很糟糕。艾尔沃德对此类人表示愤怒。

“Sorry,” he said, “the same number of people that were dying, still die.”

“很抱歉，”他说，“那些被感染濒死的人，最终还是会死亡。”

What about deaths in other countries?

其他国家的死亡率呢?

Until the past week, most people diagnosed with the virus outside of China had become infected during a visit there.

直至上周，大多数在中国境外被诊断出感染病毒的人都是在访问中国时被感染的。

People who travel a lot are often healthier and may be better able to recover, notes Lauren Sauer of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. And as countries began examining returning travelers for the virus, they found infections far earlier.

约翰霍普金斯大学布隆伯格公共卫生学院的劳伦·萨奥尔指出，经常旅行的人通常更健康，康复的可能性也更大。随着各国开始对回国旅客进行病毒检测，发现受感染病人的时间也早了很多。

That is now changing, with coronavirus cases increasing in Japan, Italy and Iran. The death rate outside of China is also rising.

随着日本、意大利和伊朗冠状病毒病例的增加，这种情况正在改变。中国以外的死亡率也在上升。

Aylward warned that officials should be careful of “artificially high” death rates early on. Some of those countries likely are identifying the sickest patients first and missing milder cases, just like Wuhan did.

艾尔沃德警告称，官方在早期应对“人为导致的高死亡率”保持谨慎。这些国家中，某些国家可能会先发现病情最严重的病人，而漏掉病情较轻的病人，就像武汉那样。

How does COVID-19 compare to other diseases?

COVID-19与其他疾病相比如何?

A different form of this new virus caused severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), a far deadlier infection, in 2003. About 10 percent of SARS patients died.

2003年，另一种新病毒导致严重急性呼吸系统综合症(SARS)——一种更加致命的传染病。大约10%的非典(SARS)患者死亡。

Influenza is a different virus family. Some forms of the flu are deadlier than others. On average, the death rate from flu is about 0.1 percent, notes Anthony Fauci, head of the United States’ National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

流感来自另一类病毒家族，且有些流感比另一些更致命。美国国家过敏和传染病研究所所长安东尼·福奇指出，平均而言流感的致死率约为0.1%。

That death rate is far lower than what has been calculated so far for COVID-19. Millions of people get the flu every year around the world, leading to hundreds of thousands of deaths every year.

这一死亡率远远低于迄今为止COVID-19统计地死亡率。全世界每年有数百万人感染流感，其中约数十万人死亡。

Who is most at risk from COVID-19?

面对COVID-19谁最危险

Older adults who suffer from conditions like heart or lung disease are more at risk than other individuals. Deaths are much less common among younger patients, Aylward said.

患有心脏病或肺病等疾病的老年人比其他人面临的风险更大。艾尔沃德指出，年轻患者的死亡情况要轻得多。

Some deaths have made news, such as the young Chinese doctor who was punished for talking about the virus publicly when it first appeared. The doctor later died from it.

某些死亡案例成了新闻，比如一位年轻的中国医生因为在病毒最初出现时公开谈论它而受到惩罚。该医生后来死于这种病毒。

In China, 80 percent of patients are mildly sick when the virus is found at first, compared with 13 percent who already are very sick.

在中国，80%的患者在病毒最初被发现时病情较轻，相比之下，有13%的患者病情严重。

The sickest to start with are at the highest risk of death, Aylward said. He added that a small number of those with mild infections do go on to die. No one understands the reason.

艾尔沃德表示，一开始病情很严重的患者死亡的风险最高。他还补充道，少数轻度感染的人也确实会出现死亡案例。没有人知道原因。

The World Health Organization says people with mild cases recover in about two weeks. The recovery time for those who are much sicker can take up to six weeks.

世界卫生组织说，病情轻微的人大约两周后就会康复。病情严重的患者的恢复时间最长可达六周。

I’m Susan Shand.

苏珊·尚德报道。

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