

Letter to the Editor

Quarantine hospitals are essential for COVID-19 contention

Dear Editor,

The COVID-19 epidemic broke out in Wuhan, China at the end of 2019¹. The Chinese government has implemented control measures, including setting up special quarantine hospitals, for the prevention and treatment of COVID-19 to mitigate its spread. The SARS-CoV-2 virus is the cause of the recent pneumonia outbreak and has since spread worldwide, posing a major threat to global public health². In addition to the effective travel quarantine of Wuhan³, quarantine hospitals are essential for the mitigation of the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Chinese health authorities notified WHO of an unknown etiology of pneumonia on December 31, 2019, which prompted health authorities to step up border surveillance. COVID-19 spreads via human-to-human transmission. At the onset of the epidemic, the Wuhan Municipal Government adopted a home quarantine approach to control it⁴; people with confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection were told to stay at home. This, however, did not curb the spread of the virus; increasing numbers of intra-family infections were reported, and it soon became evident that this home quarantine approach was not effective.

The strategy changed from an at-home quarantine to a mandatory in-patient quarantine. Buildings were allocated for this purpose, and quarantine hospitals were quickly built. People who tested positive to COVID-19 were admitted to these facilities and placed into isolation from family and friends. This led to the control of intra-family infections, and became a lesson on how to contain such a contagious pathogen. It is now accepted that all infected patients require admission to an isolation facility until the infectious period has passed. The fleeting return of quarantine hospitals played a paramount role in infection control, and these hospitals have now been partly decommissioned⁵.

COVID-19 has become a global problem; for instance, it has severely impacted, among other countries, also Iran. Indeed, a team of Chinese experts has visited Iran to provide information and guidance, and the country is now beginning to follow the Chinese quarantine route to improve its outbreak. It is hoped that this course will contain the infection in Iran as it did in China. Public health experts worldwide should therefore take lessons from the Chinese experience.

Conflict of Interest

The Authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

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Availability of Data and Materials

All data are publicly available.

Authors' Contributions

Conceptualization: Juan Chen; formal analysis: Yong-Ran Cheng, Zhan-Hui Feng, Lan Ye; visualization: Ming-Wei Wang, Guo-Hua Ji; writing: Meng-Yun Zhou.

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M.-W. Wang¹, M.-Y. Zhou³, P. Yu¹, Y.-R. Cheng^{2,3}, L. Ye⁴, J. Chen¹, Z.-H. Feng⁵

¹Department of Cardiology, Affiliated Hospital of Hangzhou Normal University, Hangzhou, China

²Zhejiang Academy of Medical Sciences, Hangzhou, China

³Hangzhou Medical College, Hangzhou, China

⁴Basic Medical College, Guizhou Medical University, Guizhou, China

⁵Department of Neurology, Affiliated Hospital of Guizhou Medical University, Guiyang, China

Ming-Wei Wang and Meng-Yun Zhou contributed equally to this work