Enterovirus Outbreak in Singapore and Hong Kong

The enterovirus outbreak, which has plagued Taiwan for some time, has claimed its first victim in Singapore. A two-year-old boy in Singapore, who showed symptoms of foot and mouth disease, has died of complications from cerebritis and myocarditis. As the boy and his family had never been to Taiwan, the possibility of transmission of the infection from Taiwan is excluded. About 300 cases of foot and mouth disease have been reported but no complication was found for these cases. The Singapore health ministry said that all doctors have been advised to be alert to any possible enterovirus infection as well as the circumstances surrounding the outbreak of the disease. Health officials have been assigned to check the state of hygiene of schools, and especially of kindergartens, as well as to increase public awareness of the importance of proper sanitation.

In Hong Kong, the first case of infection involved a five-year-old girl with foot and mouth symptoms. She has since been discharged from hospital. According to the health department, about 100 cases have been reported in the first half of the year. The rapid increase in the number of cases has given rise to fears that an outbreak is likely. Similar to Singapore, a special task force has been assigned to carry out inspection of more than 600 kindergartens. In addition, the medical administrative bureau has held an urgent meeting with a team of experts to discuss emergency measures as well as introduce two high-speed testing agents to help the doctors in diagnosing and treating patients.

Apart from Singapore and Hong Kong, cases of enterovirus infection have also been reported in some parts of Japan and China.

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China Establishes National Network for Technology Transfer

China's first national network for technology transfer has now been opened to the public. The network establishes links between institutes of higher education and commercial enterprises, allowing businessmen access to technological research findings from universities across the country. The network which has been approved by the Ministry of Education, was initiated by several local universities, namely Beida, Fudan, Jiaoda, Nanjing, Shanghai, Qinghua, Xi'an Jiaoda and Zhejiang. Thus far 30 out of China's existing 1020 tertiary institutions have already established links within the network, and more are expected to follow in their footsteps. The Ministry of Education has encouraged more tertiary institutions to focus on technological innovations in order to meet the requirements of the commercial sector. Currently, an average of 10 000 technological research programs in various fields are undertaken by institutes of higher education each year. A number of research findings even go on to make commercial profits. In this way, educational institutes in China may soon become a keystone in the country's economic and scientific development.