

Letter to the Editor

Fighting COVID-19: A Personal Opinion

The first outbreak of the disease that is now called COVID-19 started in Wuhan city, China, in December 2019. The pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2, which induces that disease, was declared by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020, and soon thereafter different variants began to emerge as a result of genetic mutations. The newest variant of concern, the omicron (B.1.1.529), initially was identified in South Africa on November 25, 2021; it was subsequently recognized in more than 20 other countries around the world. The incidence of this rapidly spreading variant has sparked considerable concern globally.

On January 13, 2020, Thailand became the first country in the world outside of China to encounter a case of COVID-19 in a person who had come from Wuhan. Thailand's first locally transmitted COVID-19 case was reported on January 31, 2020. Thereafter, the Thai government promptly established the Center for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) to take care of all aspects related to the disease and the coronavirus. Among the center's notable achievements aimed at preventing people from becoming infected was getting people in Thailand: (1) to wear masks to prevent diffusing the coronavirus via cryptically infectious persons; (2) to practice public distancing by keeping about 2 meters apart from others to avoid disseminating droplets from one person to another; and (3) to thoroughly wash their hands frequently with soap and water or approved cleansing fluids to get rid of deposits from touching materials that might be contaminated by the coronavirus. The wisdom of these exercises is evident as they satisfactorily lowered the incidence of COVID-19 in the country, as could be seen in daily reports by CCSA.

In my opinion, the practices initiated by the Thai government have been effective for dealing with COVID-19, the coronavirus and its variants. The same measure should be useful too in preventing or slowing the spread of the omicron variant when it is eventually found in this country.

There is no need to panic about the new variant, but people should still continue to take precautions recommended by the government. It should be noted that, while vaccination against COVID-19 does not prevent viral transmission, it does help to prevent viral intrusion of the host cells for induction of disease. It should be remembered that vaccinated persons can pass on the coronavirus to household members just as easily as non-vaccinated persons. Hopefully, currently used vaccines will be proven to be effective against the newly identified variant or at least in preventing serious disease and death.

Somchai Bovornkitti, M.D., FRCP, FRACP, Hon. FACP
The Academy of Science, The Royal Society of Thailand

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