



**EBMT** European Society  
for Blood and Marrow  
Transplantation

# COVID & me

an EBMT webinar for patients and caregivers

EBMT online webinar April 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020

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# COVID & me

## An EBMT webinar for patients and caregivers

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**Role:** EBMT Patient Advocacy Committee – Chair

International patient advocate for Foundation Hematon, the Dutch organization for lymphoma and blood cancer patients

***"We can find comfort in beauty, knowledge and the support of others"***



# European Society for Blood and Marrow Transplantation (EBMT)

- EBMT is a non-profit organisation composed of scientists and health care providers.
- After consent, it collects anonymized data on diagnosis, treatments, procedures, complications and outcomes.
- This data is registered (Registry) and secured.
- Data is used for research on bone marrow transplantation and cellular therapies & can lead to:
  - Development of new techniques
  - Changes in clinical practices
  - Improvements in patient care
  - Better outcome for patients

# EBMT Patient Advocacy Committee (PAC)

Patient representatives, patient organization leaders, and patient advocates from Europe

## Representing patients through these objectives:

- Ensure that patients' meaningful concerns are well integrated in all of EBMT activities and organizations
- Ensure that patient perspectives are integrated in scientific activities
- Build an educational program during EBMT Annual Meeting (Patient Family Donor Day & Patient Advocacy Sessions)
- Build and maintain a Network of patients & patient advocates organizations in Europe

**Interested in our activities? Email to [leadership@ebmt.org](mailto:leadership@ebmt.org)**

# Hélène Schoemans, MD, PhD

Hematologist and Stem Cell Transplantation Physician

EBMT Late Complications Sub-committee Chair (Transplant Complications Working Party)

EBMT Patient Engagement Task Force

University Hospitals of Leuven, Belgium, Europe



# Disclosures

No relevant disclosures for this presentation

*Because of the rapidly evolving knowledge about COVID, the information presented today will need to be re-evaluated in the near future based on the evolution of our understanding of the disease.*



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# Learning objectives

Our aim is to inform patients and care-givers the current state of knowledge regarding the COVID pandemic and its impact on stem cell transplantation and cell therapy as of **April 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020**.

- What is our **current understanding** of the impact of COVID on stem cell transplantation and cell therapy ?
- Where can you find **good sources of medical information & support** ?
- What can you do as **patient/care-giver** to get through the COVID pandemic ?
- What is **EBMT doing to help** during the COVID pandemic ?





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# Introduction

# Vocabulary

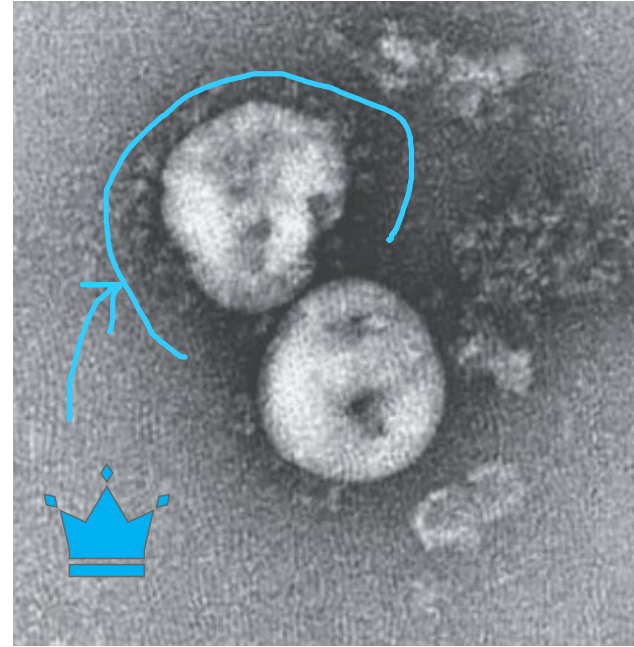
CoV = Corona Virus

SARS-CoV-2 =

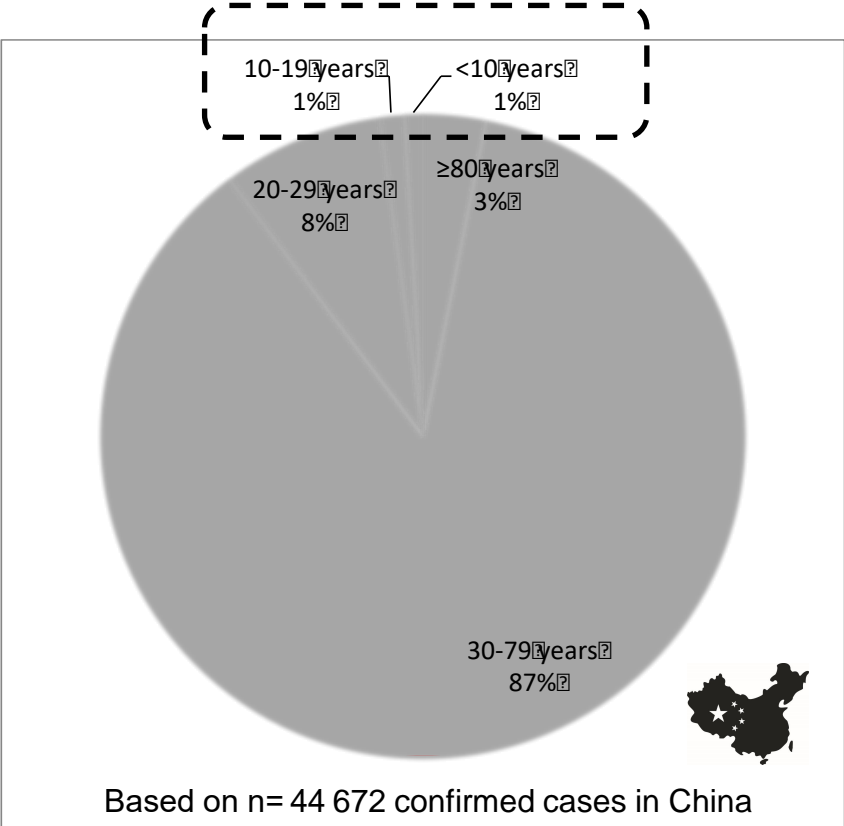
Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome - related Corona Virus

COVID-19 =

Corona Virus Disease 2019

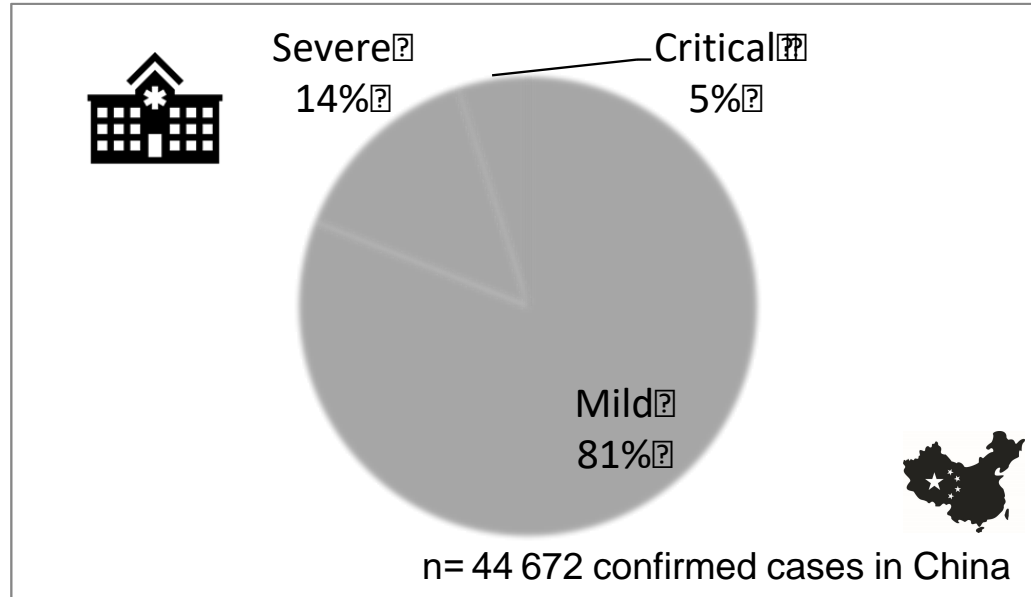
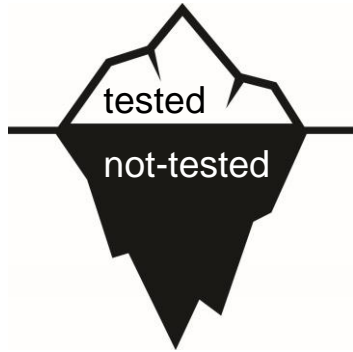


# COVID is mainly an adult disease



Zunyou & McGoogan JAMA. Published online February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
Li et al, Science, March 16<sup>th</sup> 2020

# COVID is very often a mild disease

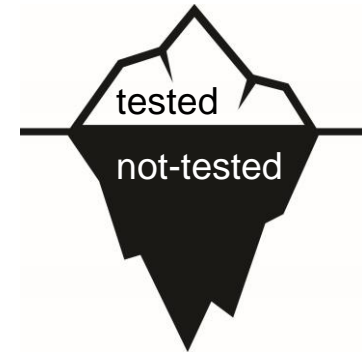
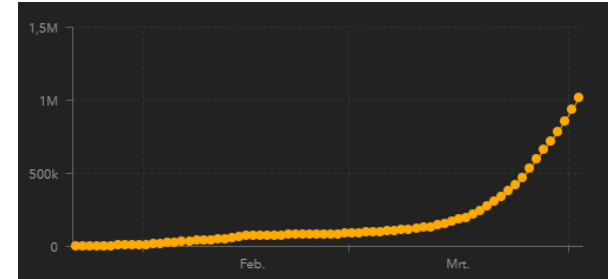
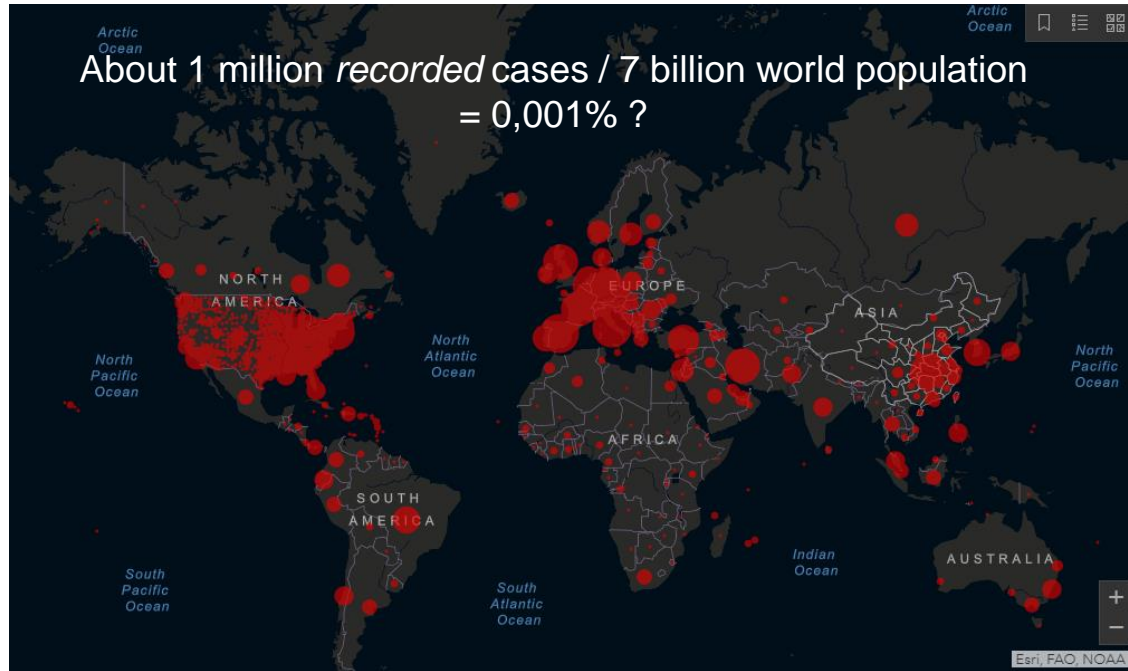


Zunyou and McGoogan JAMA. Published online February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Livingston & Bucher JAMA. Published online March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Li et al, Science, March 16<sup>th</sup> 2020

# The major problem with COVID-19 is more at the society's level than at the individual level



# COVID clogs up the health care system

Influx of COVID patients in the hospital means



less hospital and intensive care beds for other diseases and interventions



need for dedicated care pathways to avoid cross-contamination



constant fear of contamination



↓ access to standard care  
↑ need for self-management



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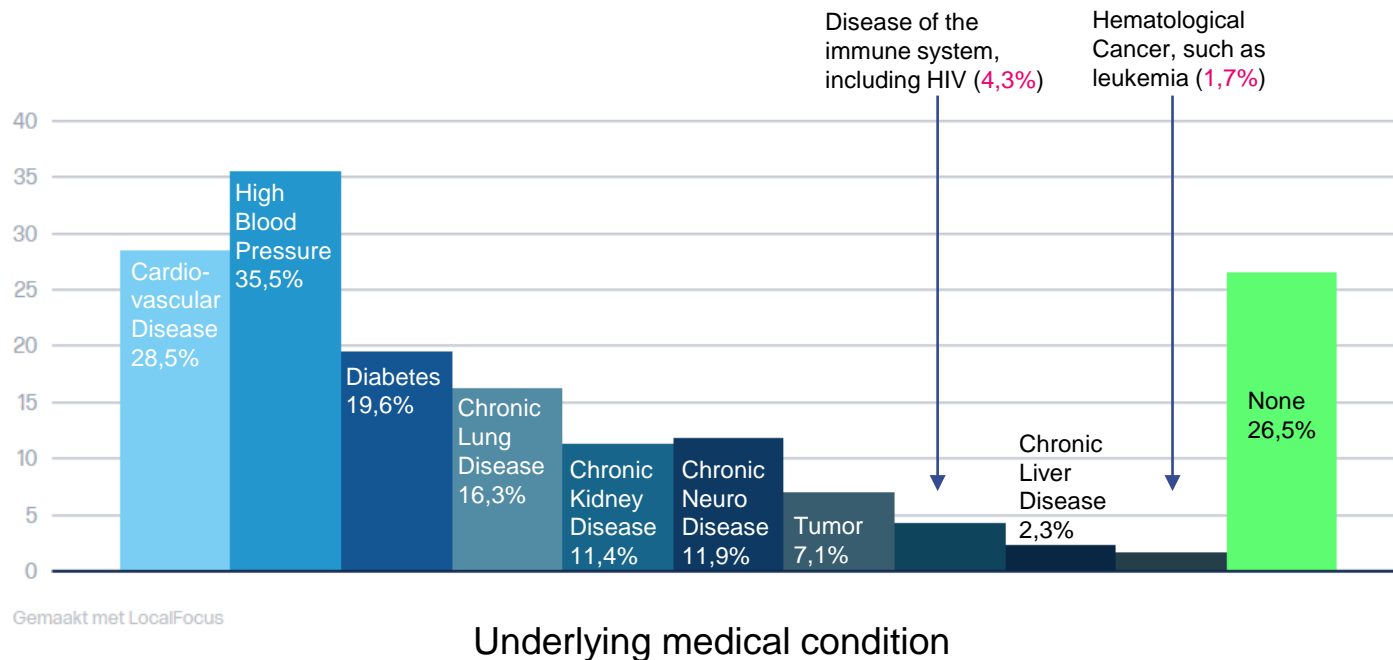
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# COVID & Cancer

# Data from COVID Hospitalisations in Belgium

% Hospitalized  
COVID patients  
in Belgium

as of March 26<sup>th</sup>  
2020 (n = 1286)





# ↑ risk of COVID with cancer?



In the Department of Radiation and Medical Oncology, University Hospital of Wuhan during the first two months of the outbreak, the COVID infection rate was:

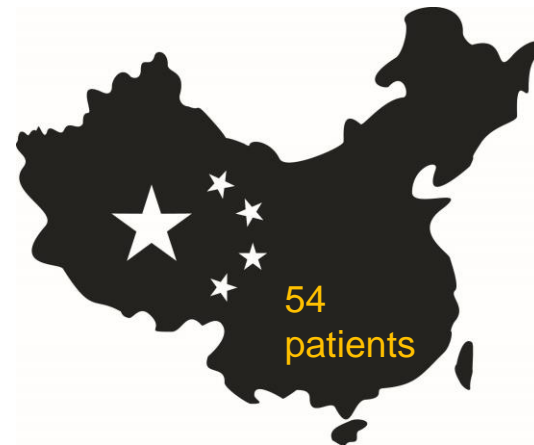
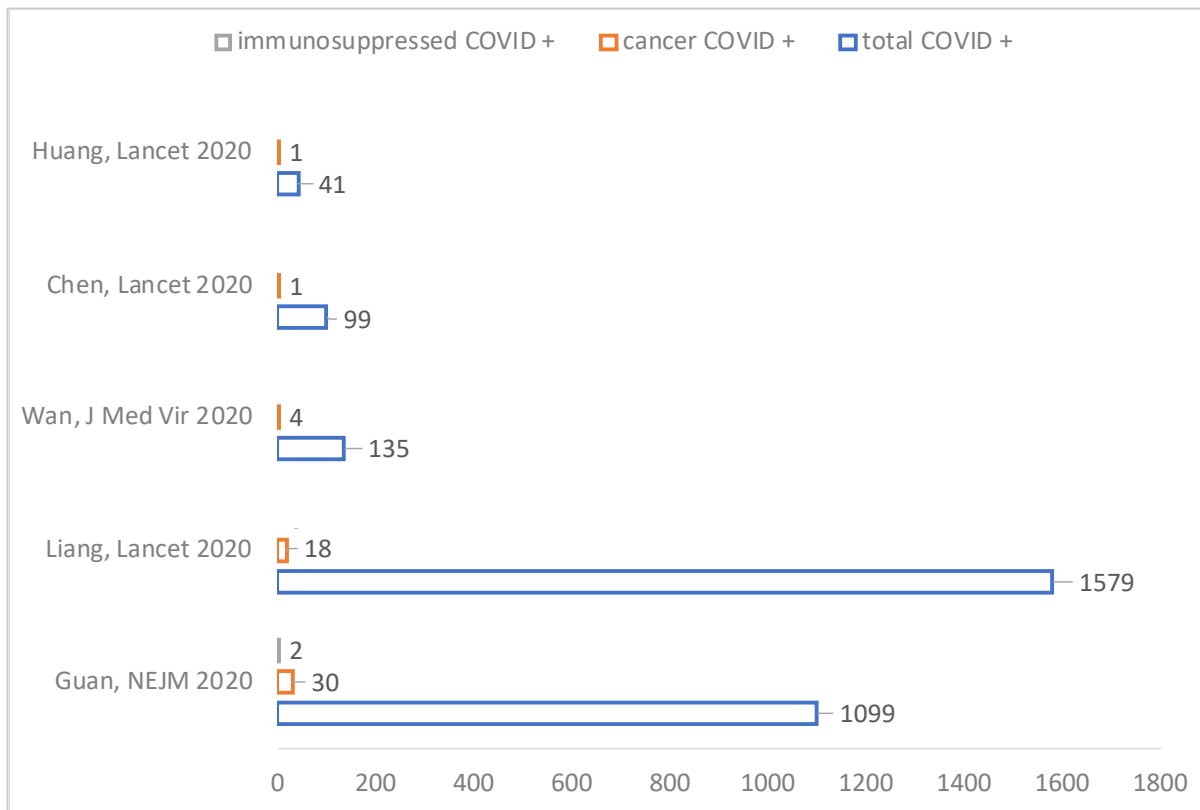
**0.79%** (about 12 COVID+ cases out of 1500 **cancer patients**)

VS.

**0.37%** (about 41 000 COVID+ cases out of 11 000 000 from the **general population**)

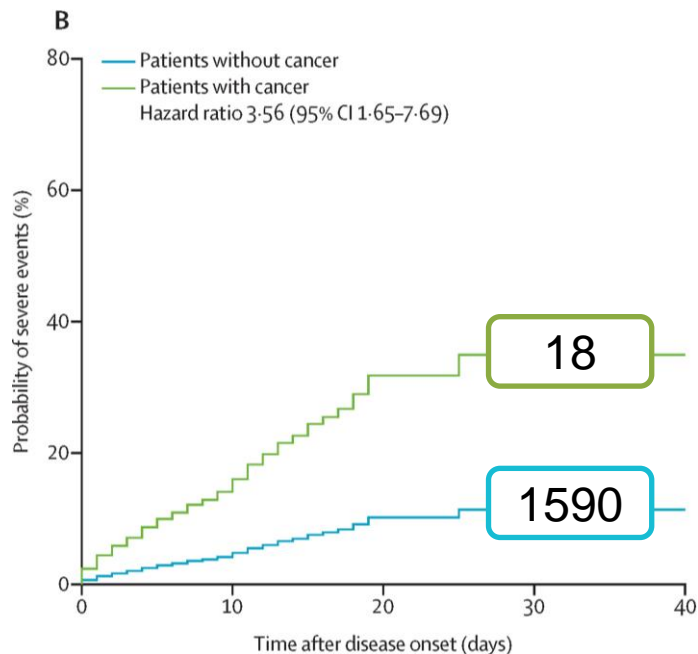


# Limited published information about cancer & COVID



Huang et al Lancet Feb 2020; 395; 497-506  
Chen et al Lancet Feb 2020; 395; 507-513  
Wan et al J Med Virol. Mar 21<sup>st</sup> 2020  
Liang et al Lancet Oncol. 2020 Mar;21(3):335-337  
Guan et al, NEJM Feb 28<sup>th</sup> 2020

# ↑ risk of severe event with cancer?



All cancers lumped together (1/3 lung cancer, only 1 lymphoma).

Patients with cancer were significantly older and had a higher rate of smoking history than non-cancer patients.

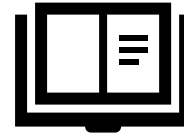
Liang et al Lancet Oncol. 2020 Mar;21(3):335-337

Xia et al Lancet Oncol. Mar 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020

Wang et al Lancet Oncol. Mar 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020

# Too early to be sure...

Very **limited** published information



Cancer **prevalence** & **care** is likely to differ from country to country



... we are learning on the job ...



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# COVID & Cell Therapy

# COVID & Transplantation/Cell therapy

There is currently **NO published DATA** to support formal recommendations  
→ **use common sense**

Other medical issues (heart, lung, ...)  
Dysfunctional immune system

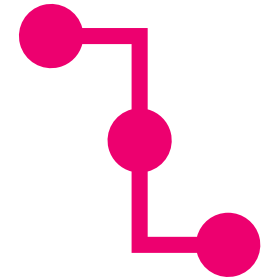


# Impact on your transplant care - BEFORE

Overload due to COVID can **reduce access to care**

Transplantation/Cell therapy = complex chain of events...

- The **donor / patient** can get infected
- The **supply chain** can be delayed
- Transfusion product / Medication **shortages** can occur
- Clinical **studies** can be put **on hold**



→ Your team will adapt depending on the local context

- ? Delay non-urgent transplantation / cell therapy
- ? Freezing cells for urgent transplantations

# Impact on your transplant care - AFTER

41% of COVID infections in Wuhan



Many **non-urgent follow-up appointments** after transplantation / cell therapy can be postponed or replaced by telephone contacts



**Know where to call if you have a issue**





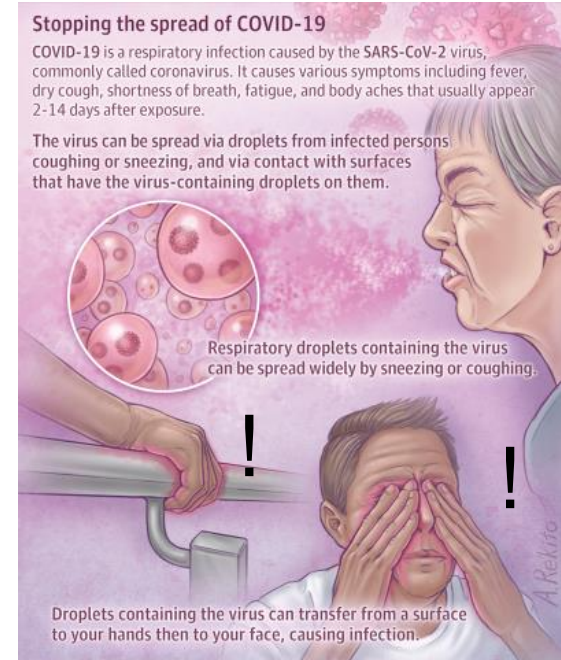
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# COVID & you

# COVID is contagious

- Each patient spreads the infection to **2-3** people (! droplets)
- It is unclear whether the virus can be stable in air, but it can probably stay on plastic/stainless steel (72h) + cardboard (48h)
- **Incubation** (time infection → symptoms) is 1-14 days, median **5 days**



Lauer SA et al. Ann Intern Med. 2020; [Epub ahead of print 10 March 2020]

Guan W et al. NEJM Feb 28<sup>th</sup>2020

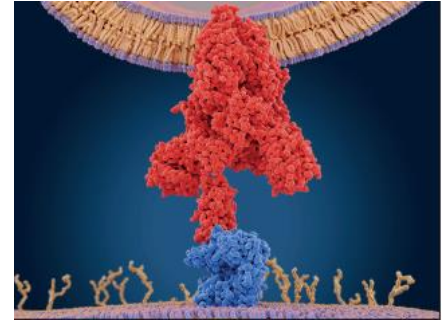
van Doremalen et al. NEJM March 17<sup>th</sup> 2020

Desai & Patel JAMA. Published online March 20<sup>th</sup> 2020

Li et al, Science, March 16<sup>th</sup> 2020

# Avoiding COVID infection

- ✓ Wash your hands with soap/water for 20 sec
- ✓ Practice social distancing (! Closed spaces)
- ✓ Cancel all travel + non-essential appointments
- ✓ Exercise
- ✓ Sleep
- ✓ Eat healthy



# Please do not...

- ✗ Touch your face with your hands
- ✗ Stop your current medication
- ✗ Buy / Start new medication based on what you read in the media
- ✗ Panic 😊

# What about masks ?!?

DIY !

There is a **global shortage** on masks.

The majority of masks **do not offer adequate protection** against virus but they can serve as **physical barrier** against droplets.



# Mask etiquette

If you decide to wear a mask...

- ✓ Put it on/off correctly
- ✓ Do not continuously touch your face to adjust it !!

## Face masks should only be used by

- ✓ Individuals with symptoms of respiratory infection such as coughing, sneezing, and sometimes fever
- ✓ Health care workers
- ✓ Persons taking care of or in close contact with someone with a respiratory infection

## How do I use a face mask?

- 1 Wash hands for at least 20 seconds prior to putting on a face mask.
- 2 Place face mask over nose and mouth. Ensure a tight seal with no gaps and secure elastics or straps.

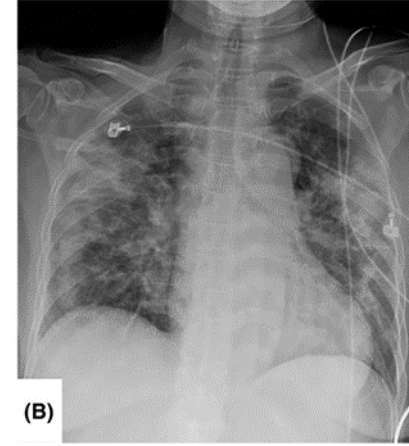
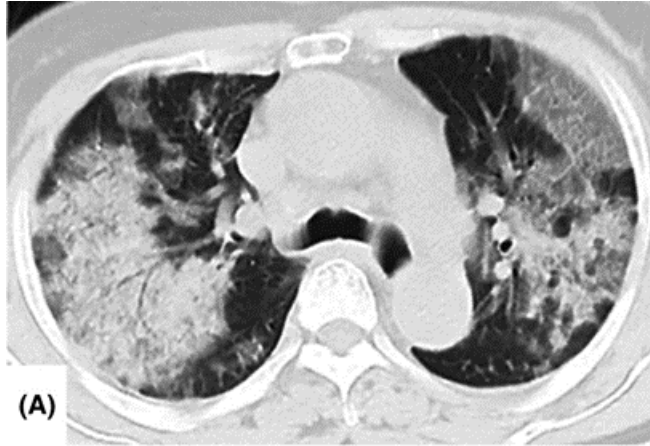


- 3 Avoid touching the front of the face mask. If you do, wash hands for at least 20 seconds.
- 4 Remove the face mask without touching the front. Discard in a closed bin.
- 5 Wash hands again for at least 20 seconds.



# What can you feel when COVID starts?

- Fever
- (Dry) cough
- Shortness of breath
  
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat / runny nose
- Change in smell or taste (?)
  
- (fatigue)
- (diarrhea)



Chen et al, The Lancet, vol 395, Feb 2020, pp 507-513  
Zunyou & McGoogan JAMA. Published online February 24<sup>th</sup> 2020  
Guan et al, NEJM Feb 28<sup>th</sup> 2020  
Giacomelli et al, CID March 2020  
Mo et al, CID March 2020  
Zhang et al, Allergy Feb 19<sup>th</sup> 2020

# What if you get a COVID diagnosis?

Make sure that your Transplantation/Cell Therapy team knows about it



1. Tell them about your COVID diagnosis
2. Make sure other transplantation issues have been taken into account
3. Ask what to do with your medication



# How to cope with anxiety?

Keep **contact** virtually / with a distance

Notice the **solidarity** around you

Reserve some time to **think about something else**

- Exercise
- Read books
- Watch movies
- Use online links (museum tours, online concerts, ...)
- Meditate?





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# COVID & EBMT

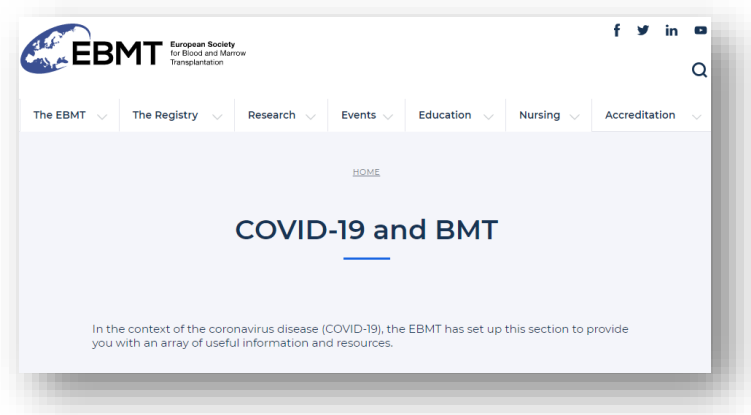
# What is EBMT doing about COVID ?

Guidelines

Helpful links

Webinars 😊

Collect data about COVID cases



<https://www.ebmt.org/covid-19-and-bmt>

# EBMT registration study about COVID

As of April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2020, there have been **84 cases reported to the EBMT** registry (Italy 25 ; Spain 22 ; France 11 ; Belgium 6; UK 4; Sweden 3; Switzerland 3; Germany 3; Denmark 2; the Netherlands 2; Iran 2; Greece 1)

Median age **55 years** (range: 4 - 77)

**66 allo-Tx**, 17 auto-Tx, 0 CAR-T; 1 unknown

Collection of follow-up data is ongoing.

Information is limited since most patients have been reported the last 10 days.



# Your transplantation team can register COVID cases in the EBMT database

Your story can help us better understand this disease  
and how to help other transplantation patients!



Thank you for helping us





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# Thanks!

All information will be available at

*<https://www.ebmt.org/covid-19-and-bmt>*

*<https://www.ebmt.org/information-patients-donors>*

*<https://www.ebmt.org/patient-advocacy-committee>*