

Our expert point of view

Allianz  Partners

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Coronavirus: 3 Questions to Anne Lepetit, Chief Medical Officer of Allianz Partners

From an outbreak in Wuhan, China, Coronavirus has transformed itself into a pandemic, shaking worldwide the best-laid plans for 2020. As of March 13, more than 130,000 cases have been detected, with nearly 5,000 deaths globally. Anne Lepetit, Chief Medical Officer of Allianz Partners, shares some information on the virus and how individuals can slow its spread...



The World Health Organization has designated COVID-19 a pandemic. Can you tell us more about it?

Covid-19 is a respiratory infection. In 80 percent of the cases, the symptoms are very similar to the seasonal flu - fever, cough, headache, sore throat. In mild cases, a patient can fully recover in 2-3 weeks.

But in 20 percent of the cases, the pathology can be severe or critical. Even in those cases, young and healthy people will usually recover in 3-6 weeks.

Fortunately, children seem to be resilient to this virus and so far, no death has been reported of anyone under the age of 10 years. The main concern is the elderly and people with compromised immunity, who can experience a more severe form with up to 16 percent mortality rate.

All the measures taken by regional authorities are meant to reduce the spread of the coronavirus – firstly, to give enough time to the local healthcare systems to set up their crisis action plans and secondly, to space out the severe cases that may need intensive care.

How do you expect the Covid-19 situation to develop globally? What should people do to slow the contagion?

The WHO declared a pandemic because there is no doubt now that the Covid-19 will spread across the world, with rapid evolution in countries with a lot of travelers. That is why, countries are implementing containment or restriction measures that must be respected as much as possible.

In addition, people can follow the basic preventive measures such as:

- Wash your hands frequently, especially after any contact with areas that could be infected (in public transport, restaurants, and so on)
- Maintain a distance of at least one meter from other people.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth frequently.
- Practise respiratory hygiene – cover your mouth and nose with tissues while sneezing, for example.

What are the first lessons learnt from this situation?

At a very early stage of the outbreak, the Chinese scientific community shared data and findings with the rest of the world. They shared common knowledge and practices about the pathology and treatments. This was aimed at a joint fight against the outbreak through a strong international scientific cooperation.

Although the situation is challenging, the pandemic will definitely contribute to increased awareness of basic hygiene. Plus, it is testing large-scale national contingency plans, which could trigger some serious thought and planning for such events in the future.

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