



# drishti

## Coronavirus Infection Rate: The Lancet

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### Why in News

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A study in the Lancet Infectious Diseases has estimated the **mean duration from onset of symptoms (coronavirus) to death to be about 18 days** and that of **hospital discharge to be about 25 days**.

This finding is based on data on 24 deaths that occurred in mainland China and 165 recoveries outside of China.

### Key Points

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- **Infection Fatality Rate**

- Overall infection fatality rate for China, where coronavirus first hit, was **0.66%**.
- Infection fatality ratio takes into account **the total number of people that might carry the virus without showing symptoms**. These people are not a part of the “official number of cases” in China.
- However, recently, **China has disclosed the number of asymptomatic (people showing no symptoms) cases**. China has found more than 43,000 cases of asymptomatic infection through contact tracing.

**Contact tracing** is the process of identifying, assessing and managing people who have been exposed to a disease to prevent transmission.

- China has decided to devote greater screening to asymptomatic sufferers and those in contact with them.

- **Infection Fatality Rate is lower than Crude Fatality Ratio**

- Researchers from Imperial College, London, had earlier said that the '**crude fatality ratio**' was about **3.67%**, which is on a par with the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates.
- The **crude rate does not take into account the severity of the infection**, which means it just **compares the total number of cases with the total number of deaths**.

- **Age and Severity of Coronavirus**

- Severity of coronavirus depends on the age of a patient, and the overall **case fatality ratio** (number of deaths per positive case) could be 1.38%.
- In those above 60 years, it was found to be 6.4%; in those above 80 years, 13.4%; and in people aged below 60 years, 0.32%.
- The findings are based on all the laboratory confirmed and clinically diagnosed cases from mainland China (70,117).

- **Implication of Study**

- The estimates of the case fatality ratio for COVID-19, are substantially higher than for recent influenza pandemics (eg, **H1N1 influenza** in 2009).
- With the rapid geographical spread observed to date, COVID-19 therefore represents a major global health threat in the coming weeks and months.
  - Till April 1, 8.53 lakh cases of COVID-19 had been reported world-wide, with 41,887 deaths.
- The estimate of the proportion of infected individuals requiring hospitalisation, when combined with likely infection attack rates (around 50-80%), show that even the most advanced health-care systems are likely to be overwhelmed.
- Estimates are therefore crucial to enable countries around the world to best prepare as the global pandemic continues to unfold.

**Source: IE**