



Human Coronavirus- HKU1

Why in News?

According to reports a woman in Kolkata is suffering from **human coronavirus HKU1**, a species of **coronavirus**. HKU1 typically **causes milder respiratory illnesses** and **does not pose a pandemic threat**.

Key Points

- **Identification and Evolution:**
 - Coronaviruses exist in multiple types, but **HKU1 is not a novel virus like Covid-19**.
 - Scientists **first identified HKU1 in 2005** as a rare isolate.
 - Evidence suggests **HKU1 has been evolving steadily in humans**, who are likely its only known reservoir.
- **Symptoms and Severity:**
 - HKU1 generally **affects the upper respiratory tract**, causing symptoms similar to the common cold and flu, including:
 - Malaise, Persistent cough, Runny nose or nasal congestion, Blocked sinuses, Sore throat, Fatigue, Headaches, Low-grade fever.
 - In severe cases, the virus may descend to the lungs, leading to **pneumonia or bronchitis**.
- **Mode of Transmission:**
 - It spreads through common respiratory transmission methods, such as:
 - Direct contact with an infected person, Respiratory droplets from coughing or sneezing.
 - Touching contaminated surfaces and then touching the face, mouth, or nose
- **Vulnerability:**
 - The disease is **self-limiting and resolves on its own**. But **vulnerable groups** like the elderly, children, pregnant women, those with immuno-compromised conditions or with co-morbidities **need to be vigilant for severe manifestation of the disease**.
- **Treatment:**
 - There is **no vaccine or specific treatment for human coronaviruses**. Most infected individuals get better on their own.