

PRESS RELEASE

Measles: forgotten but not gone

(Hong Kong, 24 September 2018) – Despite ample evidence of the safety and effectiveness of the measles vaccine, unvaccinated individuals continue to be a source of measles outbreaks in developed countries. A review in the newest issue of the Hong Kong Medical Journal brings together the most recent knowledge and best practices for managing measles.

Measles, also known as rubeola, is caused by the measles virus. The symptoms of this highly contagious disease typically include a high fever, coughing, sneezing, red eyes, and the characteristic measles rash. However, complications are common and can result in death in as many as 5% of cases. The first author, Alexander Leung of the Department of Pediatrics, The University of Calgary, Canada, stresses that there is presently no cure for measles, and that the most effective weapon we have is immunisation.

The measles vaccination is proven to be safe and effective. However, for certain individuals, such as those with weak immune systems, receiving the vaccine is impossible. To protect these people requires “herd immunity”, whereby over 93% of the population are vaccinated. This reduces the possibility of measles outbreaks that can have fatal consequences from those who are most at risk.

In 2015, there were 100 000 deaths caused by measles worldwide. Although many of these were in developing countries without ready access to vaccines, many were in more developed nations. Vaccine refusal in some places has led to gaps in the immunised population. For example, in the United States, the annual incidence of measles was 0.08 per million in 2001, but in 2015 this number was 25 times higher, at 2.06 per million.

In developed countries, vaccine negligence or refusal accounts for most outbreaks. To prevent such outbreaks, and to eliminate measles, universal childhood immunisation and vaccination of all susceptible individuals is recommended.

The research article “Measles: a disease often forgotten but not gone” was published in the latest issue of the *Hong Kong Medical Journal*.

新聞稿

麻疹：常被遺忘但未消失的疾病

(香港，2018年9月24日) – 儘管有足夠證據證明麻疹疫苗是安全和有效，未曾接種疫苗的人士仍是發達國家爆發麻疹的來源。《香港醫學雜誌》最近刊登的回顧文章綜述治療麻疹的最新資訊和最佳實踐。

麻疹是由麻疹病毒引起。這種高度傳染病的症狀通常包括高燒、咳嗽、打噴嚏、紅眼和特徵性丘疹。併發症很常見且可導致高達 5% 死亡病例。來自加拿大卡爾加里大學兒科系的梁國柱醫生強調麻疹目前尚無法治癒，但免疫接種是最佳預防方法。

雖然研究證明麻疹疫苗接種是安全有效的，惟對於免疫系統較弱的人士，接種疫苗是不可行的。要保護這組群需要「群體免疫力」，即超過 93% 人口接種疫苗。這能減低麻疹爆發的可能性，皆因麻疹爆發會增加這些帶風險人士致命的可能性。

2015 年，全球麻疹死亡人數為 100 000 人。雖然當中很多個案來自沒有現成疫苗的發展中國家，但在較發達國家的患病個案也為數不少。某些地方因拒絕接種疫苗導致免疫人群空白；例如，在美國，2001 年麻疹的年發病率為百萬分之 0.08，但 2015 年的數字高出 25 倍，達到百萬分之 2.06。

在發達國家，疏忽或拒絕接種疫苗是導致麻疹爆發的主因。為防止此類疾病爆發甚至將之根除，建議對所有易感兒童進行免疫和注射疫苗。

詳細內容可參閱研究原文《麻疹：一種常被遺忘但未消失的疾病》。

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Alexander KC Leung, KL Hon, KF Leong, CM Sergi. Measles: a disease often forgotten but not gone

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