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**How to deal with 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19): a public health practice from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Zhanggong District, Ganzhou City, China**

Peisheng Xiong<sup>1\*</sup>, Kai Xu<sup>1</sup>

1. Zhanggong District Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Ganzhou 341000, Jiangxi, Peoples R China

\*Correspondence to:

Peisheng Xiong, Zhanggong District Center for Disease Control and Prevention, No.10 Xinfeng Road, Ganzhou City, Jiangxi Province, China, E-mail: 975839312@qq.com, Tel:+8613509879341

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To the Editor:

Since the first case of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) appeared in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, it has spread quickly across China and has now been imported to 113<sup>+</sup> counties around the world. By March 11, 2020, the cumulative number of confirmed cases and deaths reached 80,955 and 3,162, respectively, in China. Besides, the number of reported cases has also rapidly increased in many other countries in the world. To date, there were over 37,371 confirmed and 1130 deaths in the outside of China. Now, the global number of reported cases of COVID-19 has surpassed 100,000.<sup>1</sup>

Zhanggong District is the central area of Ganzhou City, Jiangxi Province, China. It covers an area of 425.5 square kilometers and has a total population of 620,000 and was facing a severe public health challenge in this emergency. As a major exporting city of labor, Zhanggong District exported a large amount of adult labor to other places for employment, including Wuhan City, Hubei Province. During the Spring Festival, the people who live and work in other cities (including Wuhan) will go back to the Zhanggong District to celebrate the festival with their families. After the first case diagnosed on January 23<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the number of novel coronavirus pneumonia patients in the Zhanggong District raised substantially after the Spring Festival. To prevent the situation from getting worse, the Zhanggong District government has set up a joint prevention and control mechanism to stop the spread of the disease, which includes the following departments: (1) Zhanggong District Epidemic Prevention and Control Emergency Command; (2) Zhanggong District Center for Disease Control and Prevention; (3) Ganzhou Municipal Hospital; (4) Fifth People's Hospital of

Ganzhou; (5) Ganzhou Wulong Hakka Style Garden; (6) Ganzhou Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

When the emergency command received the suspected patient information from the fever clinic or WeChat Mini Program client, the suspected patient will be sent to the Ganzhou Municipal Hospital for body check, and the Zhanggong District CDC was notified to conduct an epidemiological investigation at the same time. After that, the Zhanggong District CDC will be sent the throat test paper, nasal test paper, and blood samples collected from Ganzhou Municipal Hospital to the Ganzhou CDC for Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test. If the PCR test shows a positive result, the patient will be sent to Ganzhou Fifth People's Hospital for isolation treatment; if the test result is negative, the suspected patient will be sent to Ganzhou Wulong Hakka Style Garden for 14 days of medical isolation observation, during which time the suspected patient will be examined many times until the quarantine period is lifted (Figure 1a). The time from receiving the suspected patient's information to the initial diagnosis is less than 24 hours. At last, through rigorous screenings, we identified a total of 28 positive patients and more than 600<sup>+</sup> close contacts.

In addition, the local government of Zhanggong District issued a decision to block the highway during the epidemic and advised the public to stay at home if necessary. At the same time, the government requires that all stores in the market are prohibited from opening except for drug stores and malls. All members of the public are encouraged to record their health status on the corresponding WeChat Mini Program client, including whether they have been to Wuhan, Hubei, whether they have had close contact with diagnosed patients, and their body temperature. (Figure 1b)

We believe that the key point to handling the epidemic is to race against time. The earlier patients and their close contacts are found, the more likely it is to control the development of the epidemic as soon as possible. We hope that our lessons learned from this outbreak will help other regions in the same situations.

## **Reference**

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**Figure legend:**

Figure 1 a: Suspected patient treatment process, the entire treatment process does not exceed 24 hours. b: WeChat Mini Program Client. PCR: Polymerase Chain Reaction

