Research

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Detection of 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) by real-time RT-PCR

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Hide Citation

Citation style for this article: Corman Victor M, Landt Olfert, Kaiser Marco, Molenkamp Richard, Meijer Adam, Chu Daniel KW, Bleicker Tobias, Brünink Sebastian, Schneider Julia, Schmidt Marie Luisa, Mulders Daphne GJC, Haagmans Bart L, van der Veer Bas, van den Brink Sharon, Wijsman Lisa, Goderski Gabriel, Romette Jean-Louis, Ellis Joanna, Zambon Maria, Peiris Malik, Goossens Herman, Reusken Chantal, Koopmans Marion PG, Drosten Christian. Detection of 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) by real-time RT-PCR. Euro Surveill. 2020;25(3):pii=2000045. https://doi.org/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2020.25.3.2000045

Received: 21 Jan 2020; Accepted: 22 Jan 2020

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Background
The ongoing outbreak of the recently emerged novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) poses a challenge for public health laboratories as virus isolates are unavailable while there is growing evidence that the outbreak is more widespread than initially thought, and international spread through travellers does already occur.

Aim
We aimed to develop and deploy robust diagnostic methodology for use in public health laboratory settings without having virus material available.

Methods
Here we present a validated diagnostic workflow for 2019-nCoV, its design relying on close genetic relatedness of 2019-nCoV with SARS coronavirus, making use of synthetic nucleic acid technology.

Results
The workflow reliably detects 2019-nCoV, and further discriminates 2019-nCoV from SARS-CoV. Through coordination between academic and public laboratories, we confirmed assay exclusivity based on 297 original clinical specimens containing a full spectrum of human respiratory viruses. Control material is made available through European Virus Archive – Global (EVAg), a European Union infrastructure project.

Conclusion
The present study demonstrates the enormous response capacity achieved through coordination of academic and public laboratories in national and European research networks.

Closure
A corrected article has been published for this content:
Authors' correction for Euro Surveill. 2020;25(3)
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A corrected article has been published for this content:
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Addendum
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Erratum for Euro Surveill. 2020;25(3)

News/announcements

On the occasion of European Immunisation Week, *Eurosurveillance* published an editorial that outlines the lessons learnt since the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, with regards to rapid vaccine development, authorisation, procurement, distribution and administration in large vaccination campaigns. Read the full editorial here.

News/announcements

ESCAIDE 2021 call for abstracts is open from 19 April to 19 May. The conference welcomes abstracts in all areas related to infectious disease prevention and control, including epidemiology, public health microbiology, surveillance, and the application of tools and methods to support infectious disease outbreaks or interventions. There will also be a late breaker call in September for issues arising after the close of the main abstract call. More information and guidelines can be found here.