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Virus Death Count

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Markets were dealt a surprise on February 12, when changes to the way coronavirus cases in Hubei Province are counted resulted in a dramatic surge in the number of new cases reported in China ("Coronavirus: Hubei Province reports spike in new confirmed cases and deaths after change in diagnostic criteria," <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/3050354/coronavirus-hubei-province-reports-sharp-spike-new-confirmed>).



For epidemiologists and for all who have been following the outbreak and related research closely, however, the new numbers are not as surprising. During an outbreak, reported numbers of cases and deaths are profoundly impacted by both the criteria for counting and by limitations such as the number of available test kits and lab testing capacity. The numbers are absolutely malleable, regardless of the actual number of infected and the actual number of dead.

Let's focus now on the death count.

In America, nearly 100% of deaths are precisely accounted for, and cause of death is determined. We keep reliable, trusted records. We go about our daily lives and never really think about a coverup in the death statistics. Maybe Jimmy Hoffa is an exception?

In China, the citizens lack trust in their government at all levels; they have felt that way for years but are now threatened with a high-risk disease, so now the distrust hits home in every household. And social media now provides some communication outlets, so more is being revealed in spite of government censorship. Videos have been shared before the government can delete them. The government was clearly involved in a coverup as the Wuhan pneumonia cases spread and people died in the last few months of 2019. We have previously written on that coverup, and the evidence of government lying and suppression continues to expand. More and more Chinese citizens are voicing objections at their own peril.

So how do we really know the death rate of coronavirus victims? How do we know that a death should be attributable to flu or pneumonia or other respiratory disease? And how can world organizations ever evaluate the lethal capacity of this coronavirus when the fatality statistics are so uncertain? One study of confirmed cases came up with a 2.1% fatality rate. Another clinical study determined a 4.3% fatality rate, while a third found a rate of just 1%. In addition, there is a time lag between confirmation of illness and death, so the valid statistic must be the final death rate after all the confirmed cases in a cohort have run their entire course to either recovery or death.

We believe the accurate reporting of fatalities will take many months to sort out. All the evidence that was suppressed in China is suspect. Meanwhile, Li Wenliang, the public-spirited whistleblower doctor who tried to protect his colleagues and countrymen by telling the truth, is now dead from the virus.

In fact, China seems to be actively thwarting efforts to sort out the true death toll by suppressing the kinds of information that might facilitate estimates of the actual number of deaths. According to a report published on February 12 in the *South China Morning Post*, “Wei Peng, a community hospital doctor in the city, said that medical staff were not allowed to list coronavirus as a cause of death when cases had not been confirmed and said that later instructions had even banned them from listing pneumonia. Instead they can only write the immediate cause of a patient’s death, such as diabetes or organ failure.” (“[Coronavirus: Why many deaths will never appear in official figures.](#)”

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/3050311/its-pneumonia-everybody-china-knows-about-many-deaths-will-never>)

China cannot be trusted on any statistic. We have suspected that for years, with plenty of evidence. Now we have absolute proof.

Here are some bullets and links about Chinese crematoriums and how they are operating at capacity. Readers can judge the lethality of this virus for themselves, based on the very imperfect news flow from sources such as these, which cannot always be independently verified. Meanwhile, the global 1029-nCoV pandemic continues to spread.

- “Number of Deaths for Coronavirus Likely Far Exceeds Those Released by Chinese Regime: Sources,” NTD, Feb. 9, 2020, https://www.ntd.com/number-of-deaths-for-coronavirus-far-exceeds-those-released-by-chinese-regime-sources_429008.html
- “Wuhan crematoriums 'are burning bodies 24/7 to cope with extra workload during coronavirus outbreak',” *Daily Mail*, Feb. 5, 2020, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7969861/Wuhan-crematoriums-burning-bodies-24-7-cope-extra-workload.html>
- “China virus funeral order fuels upset as death toll rises,” Al Jazeera, Feb. 9, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/02/china-virus-funeral-order-fuels-upset-death-toll-exceeds-sars-200209010139644.html>
- “Too many corpses to bury: China’s new campaign for cremation,” SupChina, March 30, 2017, <https://supchina.com/2017/03/30/too-many-corpses-bury-china/>

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