

# Patients under investigation for COVID-19: Where is the first point that the patients are recruited?

Dear Editor,

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a new emerging disease. The WHO already declares COVID-19 as international public health threaten. After its first occurrence in December 2019 in the Republic of China,<sup>[1]</sup> the disease already spreads to more than 200 countries around the world. Thailand is a Southeast Asian country that the disease was first detected outside Republic of China.<sup>[2]</sup> Worldwide, the preventive measures against the emergence of the new disease are implemented. Disease screening is a necessary preventive measurement. Criteria of patients under investigation (PUIs) for COVID-19 are generally applied for screening purpose. The report from the USA revealed that 70% of the PUIs are recruited from persons with a history of travel to risk areas.<sup>[3]</sup> Here, the authors retrospectively summarized the nature of patients under surveillance according to the PUI criteria for COVID-19 in Thailand during the 1<sup>st</sup> month of outbreak, January 2020. According to the public available data from Thai Center of Disease Control, there are 158 patients under surveillance according to the PUI criteria with 14 final confirmed coronavirus infection. The specific focus is given on the first point that the patients are detected. Of 158 cases, 29 cases (18.36%) were recruited at immigration posts at international airports, 125 cases (79.11%) visited to the physician at medical centers, and 4 cases (2.53%) were sent from the hotel/resort that the patients lived. Most patients under surveillance are not recruited from active screening at international immigration posts. If the patients have knowledge and concern on his/herself, the patient will visit to the physician when there is an illness. Health education is still a good primary prevention against the emerging disease. Finally, nonmedical center, such as hotel and resort, can play a role in disease control and management.

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## Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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