

# Lessons Learned from the early success and recent failure of protecting nursing home residents from Covid-19 in Hong Kong

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# Early Success

## Coronavirus

# MPs hear why Hong Kong had no Covid-19 care home deaths

**Prof Terry Lum tells of strict infection control measures that were ignored in the UK**

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**Robert Booth** *Social affairs correspondent*

Tue 19 May 2020 15.00 BST



News > World > Asia

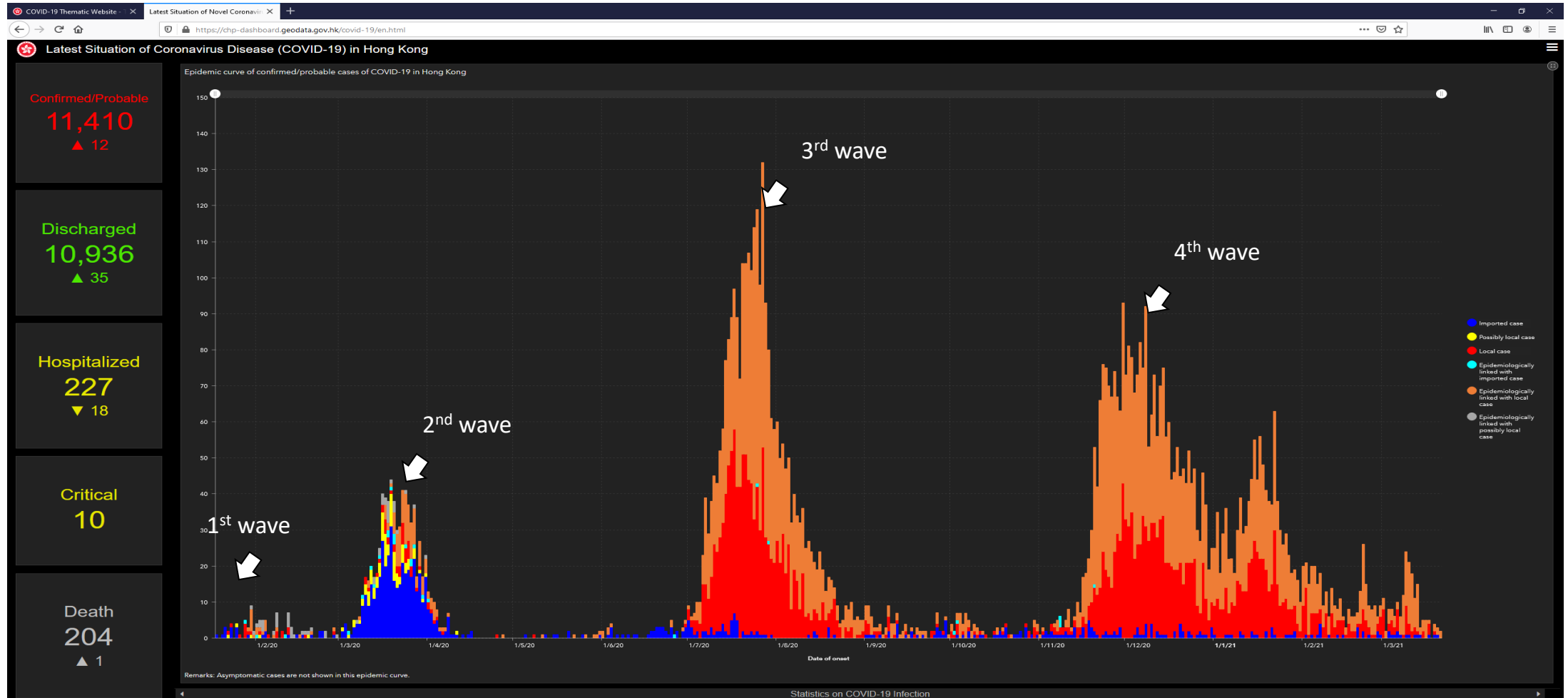
# How Hong Kong avoided a single coronavirus death in care homes

Care homes learnt a 'painful lesson' from SARS, and quickly sprung into action to make sure the same thing didn't happen with Covid-19, as **Laurel Chor** reports

Wednesday 27 May 2020 01:41 • [Comments](#)



# COVID-19 in Hong Kong



Source: <https://chp-dashboard.geodata.gov.hk/covid-19/en.html>



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# COVID-19 & LTC in HK



Journal of Aging & Social Policy

 Routledge  
Taylor & Francis Group

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/wasp20>

## COVID-19 and Long-Term Care Policy for Older People in Hong Kong

Terry Lum , Cheng Shi , Gloria Wong & Kayla Wong

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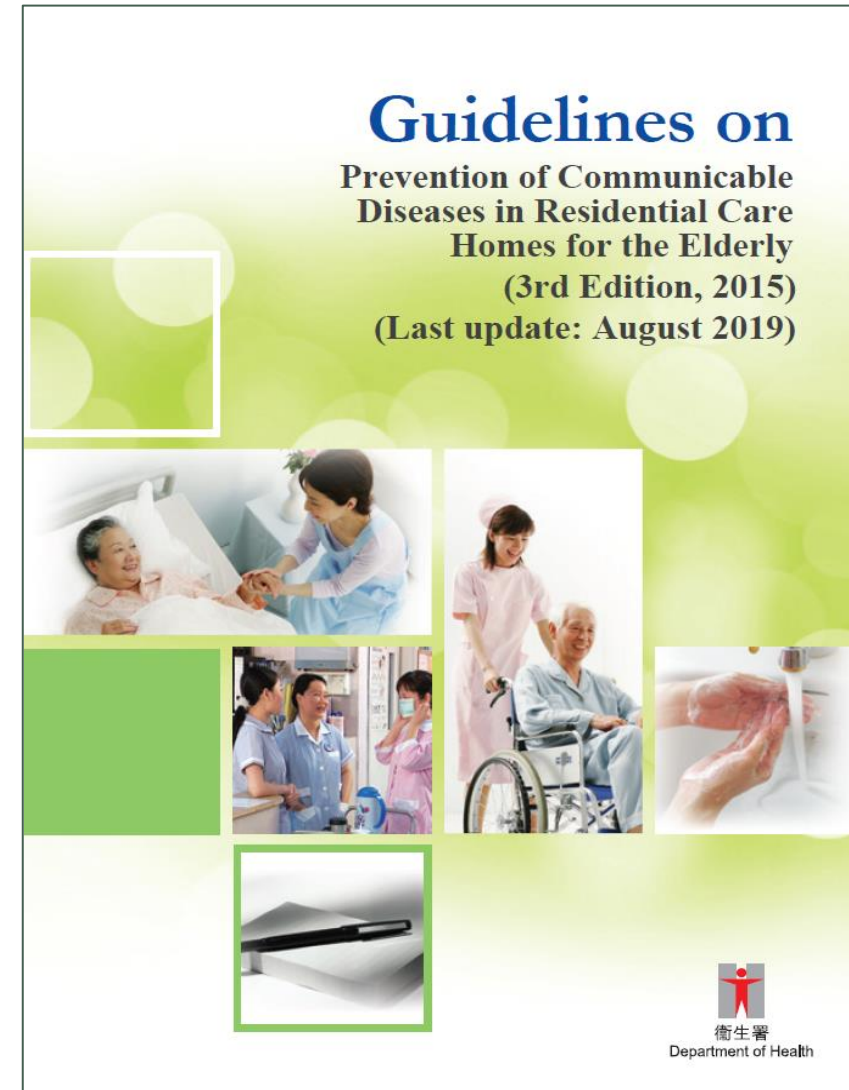
# SARS and LTC

- In 2003, SARS infected 8,098 individuals worldwide and killed 774 people.
- HK bore the heaviest disease burden in this epidemic, with 1,775 people infected and (22% of the total infected worldwide) and 299 deaths (39% of total deaths worldwide).
- Among those who were infected,
  - 324 were older adults (18% of the total number infected);
  - 72 were care home residents (22% of the total number of older adults infected);
  - 57 care home residents died (79% of care home residents infected).
  - 11 care home staff infected and 2 died.
- Care home residents:
  - 5 times more likely to be infected than the general public
  - 81% of infected care home residents acquired SARS in hospitals.
  - had a much higher mortality rate (78.1%) than community-dwelling older adults (44%) and nonolder adults (6.3%)



# Policy Change after SAR

- In 2004, the Government published the first “Guidelines on Prevention of Communicable Diseases in Residential Care Homes for the Elderly”:
- Required all care home operators to designate an Infection Control Officer to coordinate and implement infection control measures within the home according to the Guidelines.





# Lessons from SARS in 2003

- Older adults are more vulnerable to SARS as they have both a high infection rate and a high mortality rate once infected;
- Care home residents are particularly vulnerable as their risk of contracting SARS was 5 times that of the general population;
- Most infections of care home residents are acquired during hospital visits, therefore cutting the transmission between hospitals and care homes should be an important defence to protect care home residents;
- A higher proportion of elderly SARS patients require intensive care and mechanical ventilation and have longer hospital stays, thereby increasing the burden on the health-care system.
- Since both SARS and COVID-19 are caused by the novel coronavirus, these lessons have been put into practice from the beginning of the COVID-19 epidemic.

# Response to COVID-19

- Response of the HK Government:
  - intense surveillance for infection in incoming travellers and local communities;
  - isolation of infected patients in hospitals for treatment and their close contacts in special quarantine facilities for observation;
  - travel restrictions and bans;
  - school closures;
  - flexible working arrangements;
  - and prohibition of gatherings of more than four people in public;
  - But we do not have a total lockdown of the city

# Testing

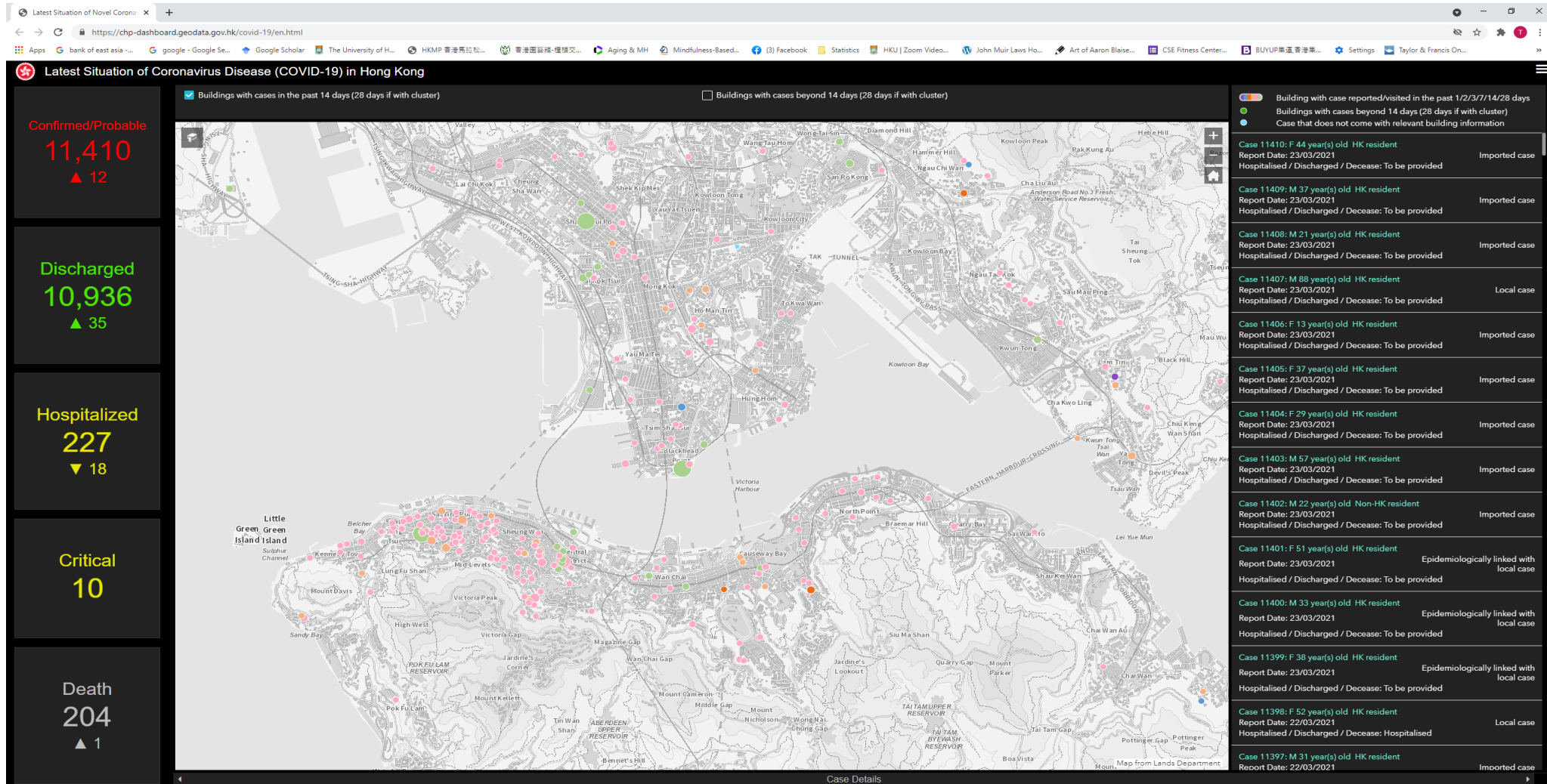
- We do not do large-scale testing in HK, we do target compulsory testing of all close contacts of confirmed cases, people belonging to high-risk groups, and people within buildings with confirmed cases.
- Examples of designated high-risk groups:
  - Taxi and Public Light Bus Drivers (Transport Department)
  - Catering industry
  - **The staff of nursing homes**
  - The staff of gyms.

# Tracking

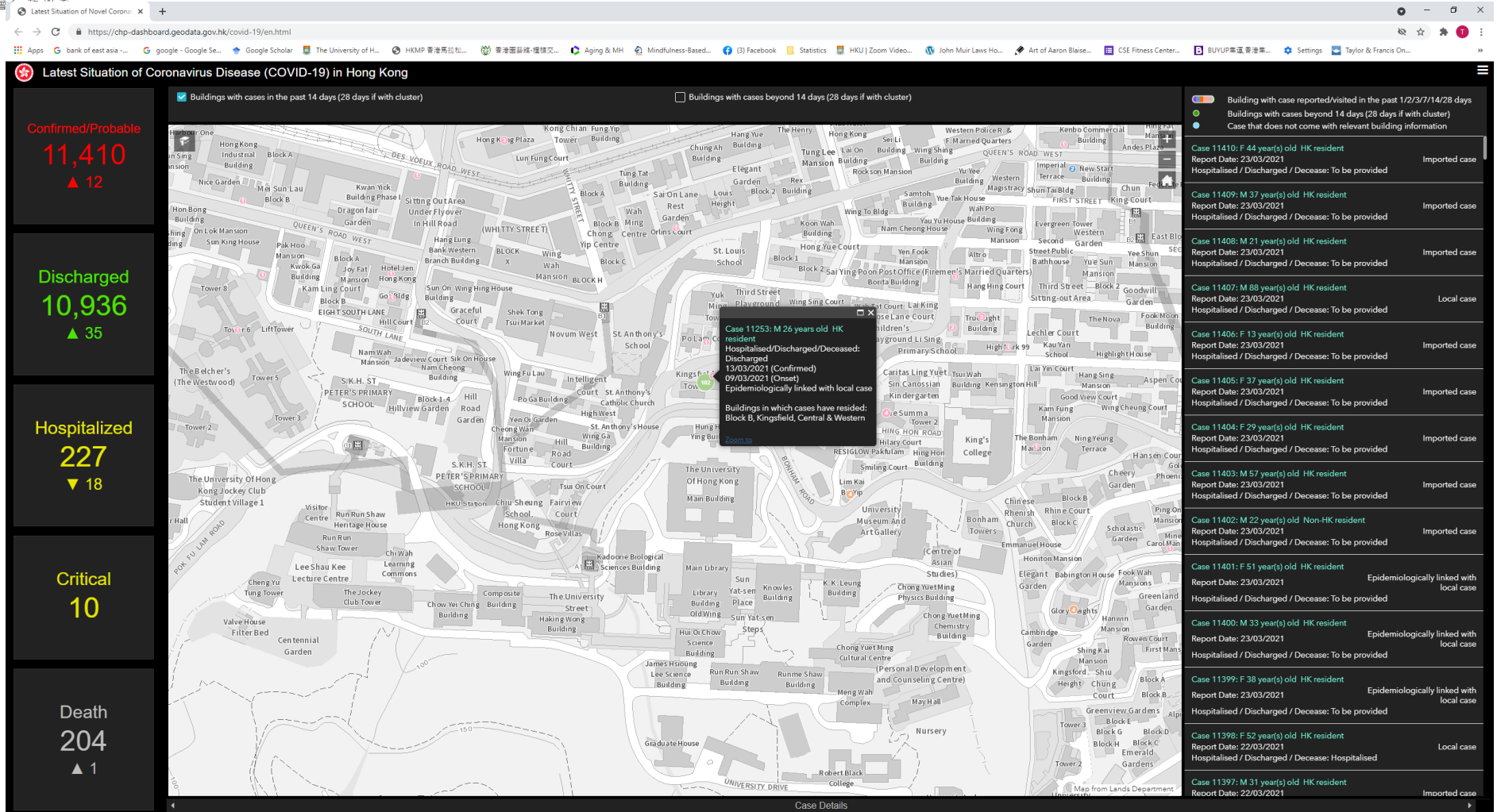
## • Interactive Map Dashboard

- The HKSAR Government launched on February 3, 2020 this Interactive Map Dashboard for effective dissemination of information on the latest situation of the novel coronavirus epidemic in Hong Kong.
- Public-private partnership: Jointly developed and managed by the Development Bureau, Lands Department and **a group of volunteers from the Smart City Consortium.**
- Datasets, now available to the public through data.gov.hk of the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer, are contributed by the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health, Hospital Authority, and relevant government bureaux and departments.

# We use GIS to track all COVID-19 CASES



Source: <https://chp-dashboard.geodata.gov.hk/covid-19/en.html>



Any confirmed cases in my neighborhood?



# Detailed information on individual cases

**Table 5: Details of confirmed/probable cases of COVID-19 reported on or before 22 March 2021**

Abbreviations for case classification in the table -

I: Imported case

PL: Possibly local case

L: Local case

Epi-I: Epidemiologically linked with imported case

Epi-PL: Epidemiologically linked with possibly local case

Epi-L: Epidemiologically linked with local case


Case No.	Report date	Date of onset	Gender	Age	Hospitalised/Discharged /Deceased	HK/Non-HK resident	Case classification*	Confirmed/probable
1	23/01/2020	21/01/2020	M	39	Discharged	Non-HK resident	I	Confirmed
2	23/01/2020	18/01/2020	M	56	Discharged	HK resident	I	Confirmed
3	24/01/2020	20/01/2020	F	62	Discharged	Non-HK resident	I	Confirmed
4	24/01/2020	23/01/2020	F	62	Discharged	Non-HK resident	I	Confirmed
5	24/01/2020	23/01/2020	M	63	Discharged	Non-HK resident	I	Confirmed
6	26/01/2020	21/01/2020	M	47	Discharged	HK resident	I	Confirmed
7	26/01/2020	21/01/2020	F	68	Discharged	HK resident	I	Confirmed
8	26/01/2020	25/01/2020	M	64	Discharged	Non-HK resident	I	Confirmed
9	29/01/2020	25/01/2020	F	73	Discharged	Non-HK resident	I	Confirmed
10	29/01/2020	25/01/2020	M	72	Discharged	Non-HK resident	I	Confirmed
11	30/01/2020	28/01/2020	F	37	Discharged	HK resident	Epi-I	Confirmed
12	30/01/2020	22/01/2020	M	75	Discharged	HK resident	PL	Confirmed
13	31/01/2020	29/01/2020	M	39	Deceased	HK resident	I	Confirmed
14	01/02/2020	23/01/2020	M	80	Discharged	HK resident	I	Confirmed
15	02/02/2020	01/02/2020	F	72	Discharged	HK resident	Epi-I	Confirmed
16	04/02/2020	23/01/2020	F	64	Discharged	HK resident	L	Confirmed
17	04/02/2020	22/01/2020	M	60	Discharged	HK resident	L	Confirmed
18	04/02/2020	28/01/2020	M	25	Discharged	HK resident	L	Confirmed
19	05/02/2020	30/01/2020	F	28	Discharged	HK resident	Epi-L	Confirmed
20	05/02/2020	04/02/2020	F	56	Discharged	HK resident	Epi-L	Confirmed
21	05/02/2020	30/01/2020	M	56	Discharged	HK resident	PL	Confirmed
22	06/02/2020	01/02/2020	F	55	Discharged	HK resident	Epi-PL	Confirmed
23	06/02/2020	26/01/2020	F	63	Discharged	HK resident	L	Confirmed

# We documented detailed information on large clusters

**Table 4: Large clusters with 10 or more cases\***

Cluster	Involved case number	Number of cases
Diamond Princess Cruise Ship	14, 71, 78, 79, 80, 81, 87, 88, 94, 96, 97	11
Hotpot dinner gathering at Kwun Tong	27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 41, 44, 50	13
Fook Wai Ching Che in Maylun Apartments in North Point	64, 65, 70, 73, 74, 76, 77, 83, 84, 86, 89, 91, 92, 93, 95, 98, 102, 103, 112	19
Travel tour to Egypt / Heng Tai House of Fu Heng Estate	119, 120, 121, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 129, 140	10
Bar and band cluster	182, 227, 276, 343, 360, 362, 367, 384, 386, 387, 389, 394, 395, 411, 413, 422, 428, 432, 433, 434, 440, 442, 447, 450, 453, 458, 462, 466, 477, 481, 483, 484, 497, 498, 499, 501, 504, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 519, 524, 525, 526, 531, 573, 576, 577, 578, 579, 581, 614, 615, 625, 626, 627, 630, 632, 635, 638, 663, 670, 674, 691, 707, 738, 746, 755, 756, 757, 760, 796, 810, 838, 844, 846, 855, 863, 864, 877, 884, 891, 904, 905, 906, 912, 913, 926, 928, 929, 930, 951, 973, 974, 976, 998, 1008	103
Wedding party at Lantau Island	191, 217, 233, 237, 250, 253, 258, 259, 287, 295, 303, 304, 332, 373, 378	15
Kerry Logistics/ Luk Chuen House	1084, 1085, 1086, 1087, 1088, 1089, 1090, 1091, 1092, 1100, 1109, 1110	12
Bun Kee/ Sun Fat/ Kin Wing	1269, 1283, 1289, 1291, 1295, 1297, 1301, 1304, 1317, 1322, 1324, 1329, 1356, 1357, 1358, 1359, 1361, 1388, 1389, 1391, 1394, 1396, 1402, 1403, 1414, 1416, 1427, 1432, 1438, 1449, 1455, 1456, 1457, 1464, 1490, 1630, 1649, 1660, 1701, 1728, 1752, 1834, 1904, 2371, 2490, 3136	46
Kong Tai Care for the Aged Centre	1298, 1302, 1307, 1310, 1311, 1312, 1316, 1321, 1323, 1334, 1335, 1336, 1337, 1338, 1339, 1340, 1341, 1342, 1343, 1344, 1345, 1346, 1347, 1348, 1349, 1350, 1351, 1352, 1353, 1354, 1355, 1360, 1395, 1404, 1407, 1408, 1410, 1473, 1485, 1487, 1560, 1606, 1659, 1688, 2343	45
Ming Chuen House of Shui Chuen O Estate	1294, 1377, 1378, 1379, 1380, 1381, 1382, 1383, 1384, 1385, 1386, 1387	12
Tsz Wan Shan Shopping Centre Green River	1430, 1440, 1444, 1445, 1484, 1507, 1508, 1519, 1521, 1522, 1531, 1532, 1551, 1552, 1555, 1586, 1605, 1622, 1623, 1626, 1698, 1702, 1744, 1756, 1835, 1841, 1843, 1844, 1934, 1935, 2001, 2014, 2130, 2187, 2232, 2278, 2279, 2636	38

1<sup>st</sup> care home outbreak



URSUS Fitness (Sai Ying Pun)	<p>11129, 11131, 11132, 11134, 11136, 11137, 11138, 11139, 11140, 11141, 11144, 11145, 11146, 11147, 11148, 11149, 11150, 11152, 11153, 11154, 11155, 11156, 11157, 11159, 11161, 11162, 11163, 11164, 11165, 11166, 11167, 11168, 11169, 11170, 11171, 11172, 11173, 11174, 11175, 11176, 11177, 11179, 11180, 11181, 11182, 11186, 11187, 11188, 11189, 11190, 11192, 11194, 11195, 11196, 11197, 11198, 11202, 11203, 11204, 11205, 11206, 11207, 11208, 11210, 11213, 11214, 11215, 11218, 11219, 11220, 11221, 11222, 11223, 11224, 11225, 11226, 11227, 11229, 11230, 11231, 11232, 11233, 11234, 11235, 11237, 11238, 11239, 11240, 11241, 11242, 11247, 11248, 11249, 11250, 11251, 11253, 11254, 11257, 11258, 11260, 11264, 11266, 11268, 11269, 11270, 11271, 11275, 11276, 11277, 11286, 11290, 11292, 11295, 11296, 11297, 11304, 11305, 11306, 11307, 11308, 11309, 11311, 11314, 11315, 11316, 11322, 11329, 11332, 11333, 11335, 11336, 11341, 11344, 11348, 11349, 11358, 11359, 11361, 11365, 11370, 11372, 11379, 11387, 11388, 11389, 11390, 11391, 11399, 11400, 11401</p>	150
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\*Cases involved including confirmed close contacts with epidemiological linkage

# Responses to COVID-19

- HK residents changed their behaviour immediately after the outbreak:
  - Wearing a face mask in public areas by almost everyone to prevent silent transmission by asymptomatic-infected individuals;
    - Increased from 74.5% in late January to 97.5% by mid February.
  - Enhanced hand hygiene by frequent use of hand sanitizers and handwashing;
    - 92.5% reported washing or sanitizing their hands more often in mid-February
  - Voluntarily maintaining social distance.
    - 90.2% of adults reported that they avoided going to crowded places

# Responses to COVID-19

- Hong Kong's Social Welfare Department issued the first operation guideline on January 28, 2020:
  - Stopped visitation to care homes
  - all daycare centers for older people would suspend their services to reduce the risk of infection arising from the gathering of people, but centers would remain open at a limited capacity to serve those who do not have anyone at home to care for them during the day time;
  - HCBS would be limited to providing only home-delivered meals, escort to medical appointments, nursing care, and administration of medicine;
  - provided financial support for NGO service providers to procure sanitary and PPE and to hire additional temporary staff for extra cleaning and hygiene practice.
  - suspended all non-essential medical services, including regular doctor visits for chronic diseases.

# Care Homes

- Service providers imposed strict stringent visitation rules and hygiene practices immediately above and beyond the requirements of the infectious control Guidelines.
- All face-to-face visits by outsiders, including family members and volunteers, were terminated.
- Remote meetings via information technology channels (e.g., Zoom and FaceTime) have been organized in some care homes to maintain residents' social connections.
- The body temperature of all staff who work in care homes is checked before work, and anyone with a fever or other signs of respiratory infection will not be allowed to work. All staff is required to wear a face mask all day while working.
- All residents are required to wear a face mask in public areas inside the care homes. They are asked to eat and to stay in their rooms most of the time.
- Strict hand hygiene practice is observed.





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# Recent Failure

# Recent failure







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# Hong Kong's success in fending off COVID comes back to haunt

For two years, Hong Kong successfully insulated most of its residents from COVID-19, even going nearly three months late last year without a single locally spread case

By ALICE FUNG and ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL Associated Press  
February 27, 2022, 10:35 AM

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CORONAVIRUS

# How Hong Kong went from 'zero-Covid' to the world's highest death rate

Despite having two years to prepare, critics say the government was caught off-guard by a virus outbreak that has killed thousands of unvaccinated seniors.



— A patient being transferred from Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Hong Kong on Thursday, after the government said the hospital would be used only for Covid-19 patients. Isaac Lawrence / AFP - Getty Images

# Hong Kong powerless to halt Covid deaths surge

Cases hit 30,000 a day despite strict lockdown and border controls

Didi Tang, Beijing  
Friday March 11 2022, 6.50pm GMT,  
The Times



Hong Kong has recorded more than 600,000 cases in the latest wave, which began at the end of last year  
DALE DE LA REY/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

China's "zero-tolerance" strategy to stamp out coronavirus appears to have failed catastrophically in Hong Kong, with the city now suffering the highest weekly death rates in the world.

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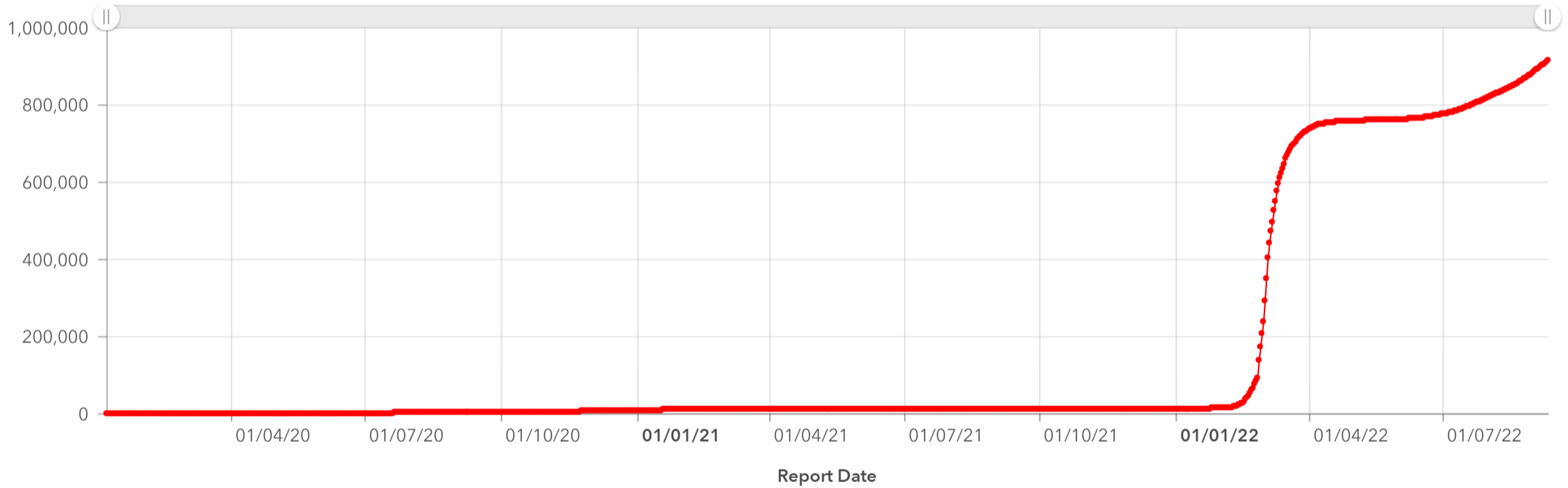




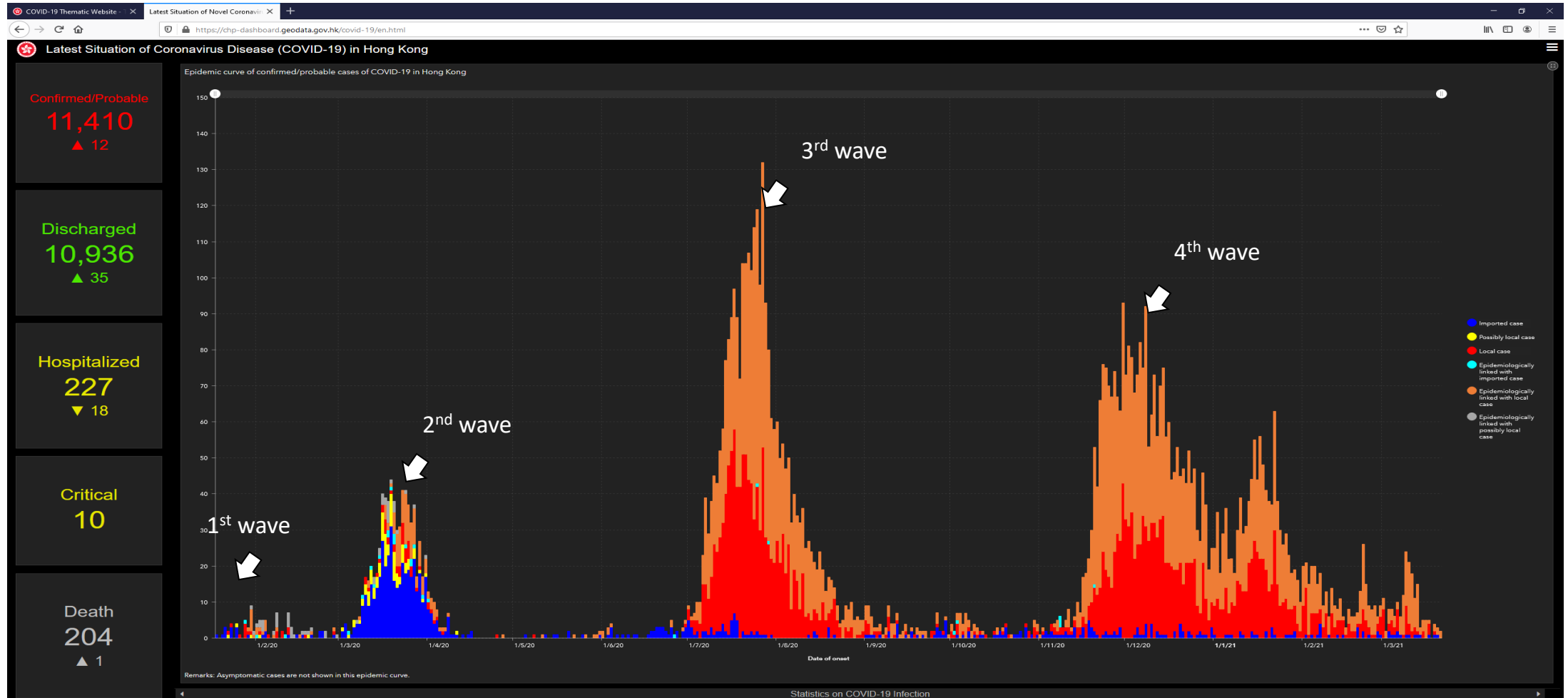
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## Statistics on Cases Tested Positive for SARS-CoV-2 Virus



# COVID-19 in Hong Kong

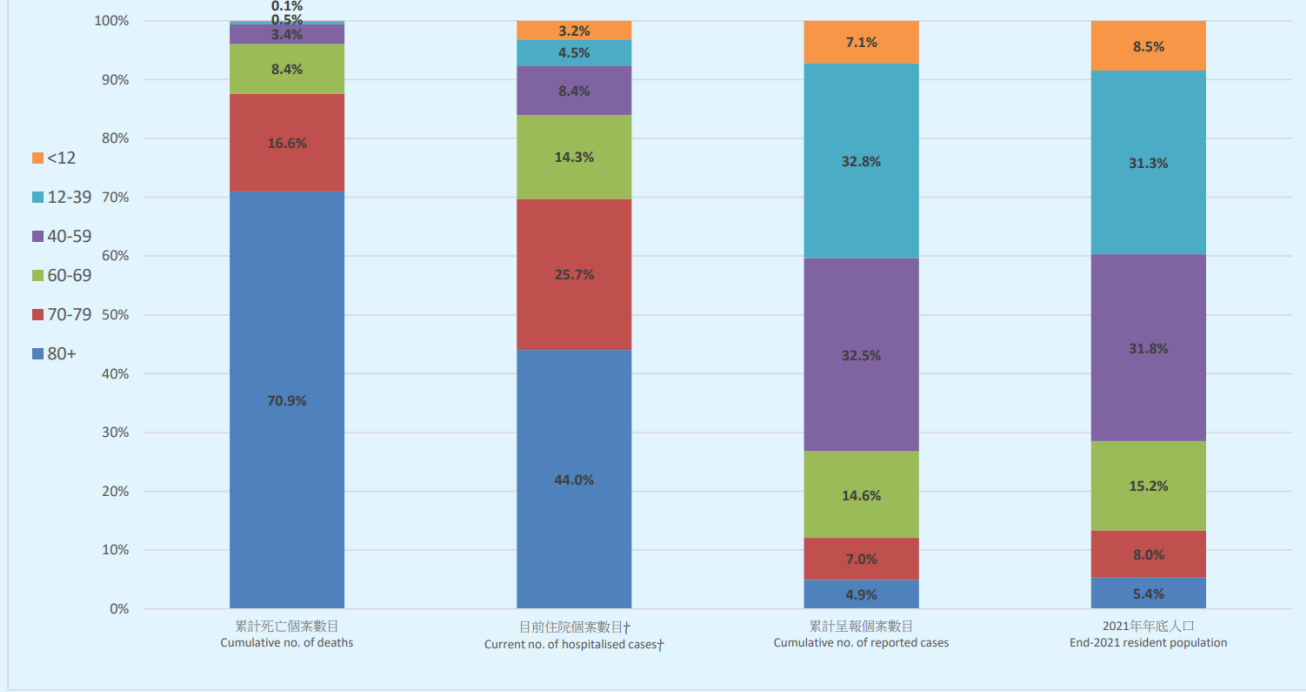


Source: <https://chp-dashboard.geodata.gov.hk/covid-19/en.html>

**70歲或以上長者佔死亡個案的大多數，遠高於他們所佔的人口比例 (13%)。**  
**Elderly aged 70+ account for a disproportionately large share of death cases, relative to their 13% population share.**

與居住人口比較的死亡及住院個案的年齡分佈 【臨時數字】

Comparison on age profile of deceased and hospitalised cases against resident population [Provisional figures]



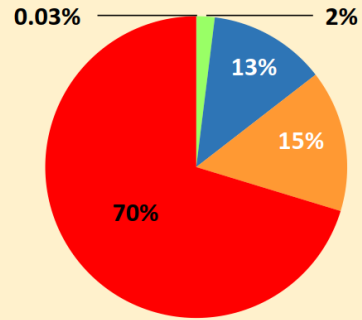
† 由4月20日起，醫管局採用新的統計方法，由確診2019冠狀病毒病當日起計28日後，病人會列為康復。  
 Starting from 20 April, the Hospital Authority has adopted a new counting method. Patient is considered as recovered, after 28 days from the date tested positive for COVID-19.

# More than 50% deceased were RCH residents

## 第5波死者個案 Deceased in the 5th Wave

累計數目 Cumulative number	9,544
年齡範圍 Age range	0 - 112
年齡中位數 Median	86
男性與女性比例 Male to female ratio	1.42

### 疫苗接種史\* Vaccination History

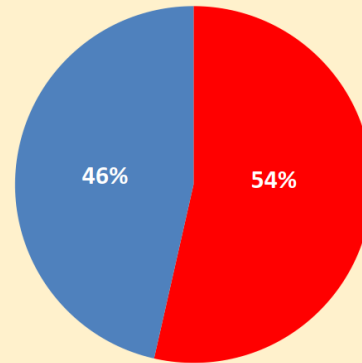


大約七成沒有  
 接種疫苗#  
**About 70%**  
**were unvaccinated#**

# 包括已接種一劑但未滿  
 14 天的人士 Including  
 those that have received 1  
 dose but not yet reached  
 14 days

- 已接種四劑(滿14天) Received 4 doses (reached 14 days)
- 已接種三劑(滿14天) Received 3 doses (reached 14 days)
- 已接種兩劑(滿14天) Received 2 doses (reached 14 days)
- 已接種一劑(滿14天) Received 1 dose (reached 14 days)
- 沒有接種疫苗# Unvaccinated#

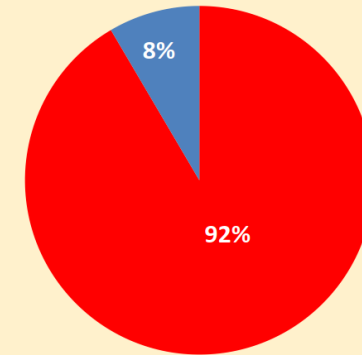
### 居住院舍情況\* Residential Care Home (RCH) Status



- 院舍人士 RCH Residents
- 非院舍人士 Non-RCH Residents

超過五成為居於院舍人士  
**More than 50% were**  
**RCH residents**

### 長期病患歷史情況\* History of Known Chronic Diseases



- 已知有長期病患 With known chronic diseases
- 沒有長期病患歷史 No history of chronic diseases

超過九成有已知長期病患情況  
**More than 90% were**  
**with known chronic diseases**

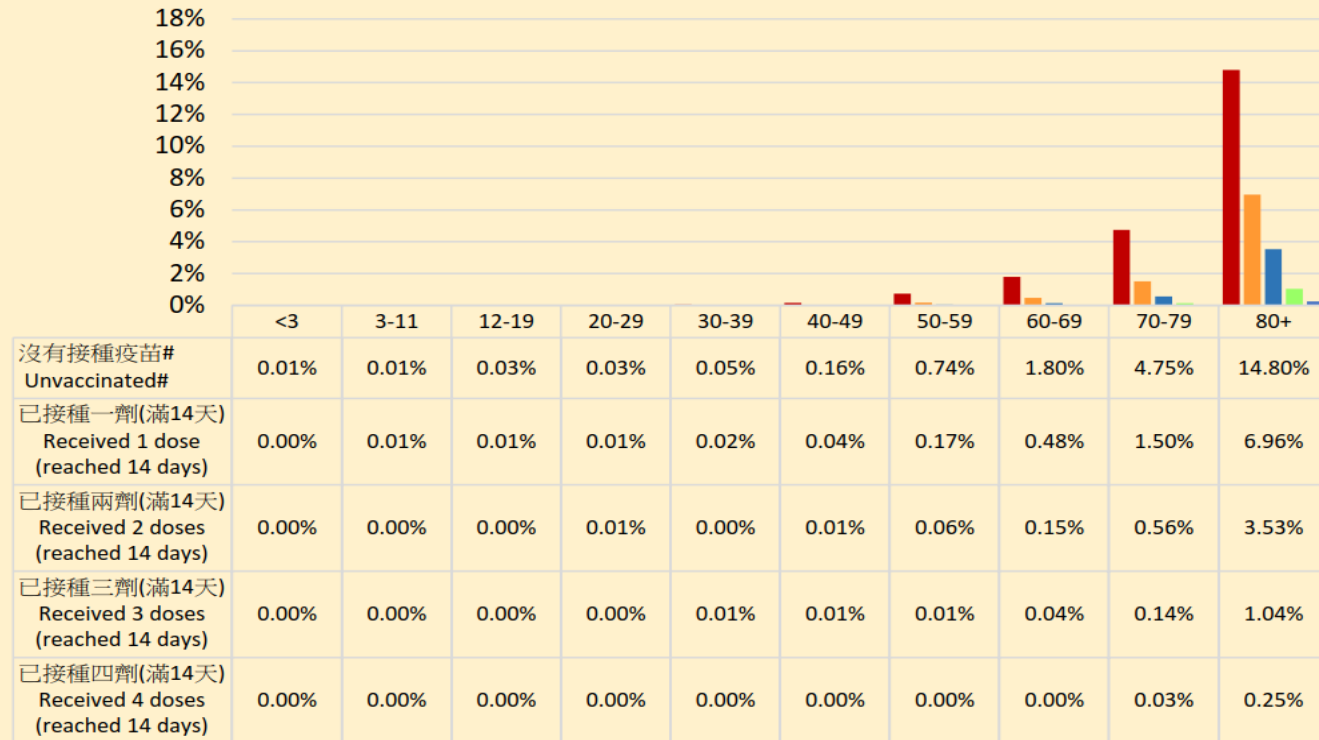
\* 不包括待定個案 Excluding pending cases

# Vaccination & dead rates

按年齡組別和疫苗接種情況\*劃分的死亡率  
 Case Fatality Rate by Age Group and Vaccination Status\*

臨時數據  
 Provisional data

- 超過95%死亡個案為60歲或以上長者
- 接種首劑疫苗已有明顯保護力
- 依時接種第二和第三劑疫苗，可進一步提高保護力
- 早接種，早保護
- **Over 95% fatal cases were elderly aged 60 years or above**
- **Having the first dose already offers observable protection**
- **Timely having the second and the third doses can enhance protection**
- **Early vaccination for early protection**



\* 計算是根據個別個案的呈報日期，相對於疫苗接種日期之時間間隔。這額外對計算疫苗劑數的方法是由2022年4月7日開始應用，包括追溯所有過往數據。  
 It is counted based on the date of case reporting of each reported case with respect to the date of vaccination to arrive at the time interval. This additional counting method for 'no. of vaccine doses received' is implemented starting from 7 April 2022, including all retrospective data.

# 包括已接種一劑但未滿14天的人士 Including those that have received 1 dose but not yet reached 14 days

Business

# Hong Kong's Nursing Homes Are Unvaccinated Hotbeds of Covid

- Just 15% of elderly home residents are vaccinated in Hong Kong
- Dramatic improvement in vaccine uptake could avert many deaths



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# BOTZ

GLOBAL X  
by Mirae Asset

# Lesson 1

- Early success in containing the spread of the COVID-19 virus to nursing homes led to a false sense of protection and contributed to a low vaccination rate among nursing home residents.
- The failure of public health communication by the government also contributed to the low vaccination rate among older people and their caregivers.
- There is no systematic effort to increase vaccination among nursing home residents by the government.



# Lesson II

- The highly efficient hospital-driven public health care system was highly vulnerable to a sudden increase in case numbers.
- The very strict hospital isolation policy, even for asymptomatic to minor symptom patients, contributed to the breakdown of the public health care system.
- The government did not invest funding to expand its community treatment capacity for patients with mild symptoms in the community.
- The government failed to use the two years after the initial outbreak to transition its COVID-19 policy from identification, contact tracing, and isolation to the prevention of severe symptoms and death among those infected.



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*Thank You*

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