

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG  
FACULTY OF MEDICINE

Department of Community and Family Medicine

Professor Wong Tze Wai  
MBBS, MSc, FAFOM, FRCP,  
FFPHM, FHKAM (Community Medicine)

4/F., School of Public Health, Prince of Wales Hospital  
Shatin, New Territories, HONG KONG  
Tel: (852) 22528777, Fax: (852) 26063500  
e mail: twwong@cuhk.edu.hk

Dr. Thomas Tsang  
Consultant  
Department of Health  
Wu Chung House  
213, Queen's Road East  
Wan Chai

12 August 2003

Dear Dr. Tsang

Re: Requisition of epidemiological data on SARS

I would like to acquire epidemiological data on severe acute respiratory syndrome in Hong Kong for the following research projects:-

1. Spatial-temporal modeling of the SARS epidemic

Objective: To construct an epidemic model to characterize the spatial-temporal distribution of SARS in Hong Kong.

Justification: The model enables a better understanding of the characteristic nature and spread of the disease.

Data sought: I need individual patient data (anonymous) that include the gender, age, onset date, date of hospitalization, place of residence, classification of cases by whether he/she is a health care worker (and job nature, e.g., nurse, health care assistant, ... etc.), and the following risk factors: contact history with a SARS patient (no/yes, date of contact, relation with patient contacted – whether family / other member of household, relatives not in the same household, other contacts e.g., friends, occupational contacts, e.g., patients under care)

2. Epidemic characteristics at Amoy Garden

Objective: To study the epidemiological features of the SARS outbreak at Amoy Garden in relation to the spatial and temporal distribution of risk expressed as attack rate.

Justification: There are a number of hypotheses on the mode of transmission of the outbreak of SARS at Amoy Garden. I require epidemiological data to evaluate various hypotheses on disease transmission.

Data sought: I would like to seek data on the line listing of the cases in Amoy Garden from the start of the outbreak to the last known case. The data (anonymous) include: date of onset, place of residence down to the block, flat and floor, and total number of residents (including family and non-family members) in the patient(s)' household. To evaluate the role of animal reservoirs/ carriers, we would also like to seek information on the results of the virological and RNA studies of environmental samples and reservoirs – rodents and cats, and arthropod vectors.

### 3. Epidemic characteristics at Metropole Hotel

Objective: To study the epidemiological features of the SARS outbreak at Metropole Hotel in relation to the spatial and temporal distribution of risk expressed as attack rate.

Justification: The mode of transmission of the outbreak of SARS at Metropole Hotel is uncertain. I need epidemiological data to evaluate various hypotheses on disease transmission.

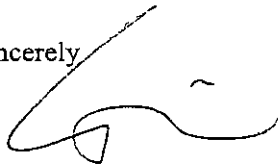
Data sought: Line listing of all known cases (whether diagnosed in Hong Kong or elsewhere) by the room number and dates they stayed (i.e., when they checked in and out), the date on which the hotel guest left Hong Kong and his/her place of destination, and the number of guests in each room where secondary cases of SARS were found. (If available, I would also like to seek data on the number of guests by room number in the whole hotel during the period from 21 February to the date when the last known case left the hotel. This gives an indication of the risk expressed as attack rates). I would appreciate if you can provide me with the environmental study results: the ventilation and the virological studies of environmental samples.

I guarantee that strict confidentiality of the data will be kept, and that line-listing data will not be revealed in any forms of publications. In the write-up of scientific research reports and papers, only grouped data will be used.

Although the SARS epidemic has ended, a thorough understanding of the epidemiological characteristics is of paramount importance for the public health profession to better understand the disease, and be better prepared in the event of a possible comeback of SARS.

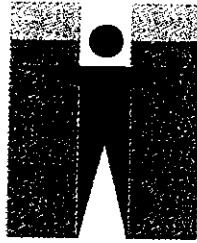
I trust you would share the epidemiological data with me, as I have shared mine on the Prince of Wales Hospital outbreak with your team, without any reservation.

Sincerely



Wong Tze Wai  
Professor

衛生署  
疾病預防及控制部  
香港灣仔皇后大道東 213 號  
胡忠大廈 18 樓



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
Disease Prevention and Control Division  
18<sup>th</sup> Floor, Wu Chung House  
213 Queen's Road East, Wanchai  
Hong Kong

本署檔號 OUR REF: (24) in DH/CM/11/51 XVI

來函檔號 YOUR REF:

電話 TEL.: 2961 8878

圖文傳真 FAX No.: (852) 2575 4110  
(852) 2574 2113

19 August 2003

Professor Wong Tze Wai  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong  
Faculty of Medicine  
Department of Community and Family Medicine  
4/F., School of Public Health  
Prince of Wales Hospital  
Shatin, New Territories

By Fax (2606 3500)

Dear Professor Wong,

**Re: Requisition of epidemiological data on SARS**

Thank you for your letter dated 12 August 2003. We are reviewing your request for data and we will get back to you concerning your request.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely,

(Dr Thomas TSANG)  
for Director of Health

*Telephoned Dr. Tsang on 18-8-03 (1pm)  
Did not return call; left message for  
him to return call after 5pm.  
Called again at 6pm - Dr. Tsang  
has left, and I was told  
by Dr. Sammy Ng that he is going  
on leave for 1/2 weeks.  
\* (This is my notes after  
receiving this from him.)  
T. Wong  
4-2-04*

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衛生署  
疾病預防及控制部

香港灣仔皇后大道東 213 號  
胡忠大廈 18 樓



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Professor Wong Tze Wai  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong  
Faculty of Medicine  
Department of Community and Family Medicine  
4/F., School of Public Health  
Prince of Wales Hospital  
Shatin, New Territories

12 November 2003

By Fax & Post  
(2606 3500)

Dear Professor Wong,

**Re: Requisition of epidemiological data on SARS**

I refer to your letter dated 12 August 2003 about the requisition of SARS data for research projects. You may wish to know that there is "Research Fund for the Control of Infectious Diseases" calling for grant application, which provides funding to cover research projects relevant to the control of infectious diseases in the areas of etiology, epidemiology and public health; Basic research; and Clinical and health services research. The relevant website is at <http://www.hwfb.gov.hk/rf/>.

Regarding the data request in your letter, the Department of Health is preparing to publish in scientific journals the Amoy Gardens and Hotel M outbreaks in collaboration with other government departments and the World Health Organization which are involved in the investigations. Furthermore, substantial efforts are required on our part to compile the data set out in your letter. Nonetheless, we are open to collaborating with research institutions in conducting joint research projects, for instance, via the Research Fund for the Control of Infectious Diseases. In this connection, we welcome you sending a detailed research protocol on specific topics for further consideration.

Yours sincerely,

(Dr Thomas TSANG)  
for Director of Health

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