



# The Incubation Period of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Petaling District, Malaysia



**NIH**  
INSTITUT KESIHATAN NEGARA  
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

Ridwan Sanaudi<sup>1</sup>, Ainul Nadziha Mohd Hanafiah<sup>2</sup>, Lee Soo Cheng<sup>3</sup>, Lim Kuang Kuay<sup>4</sup>, Waramlah Ramlan<sup>5</sup>, Diana Raj<sup>5</sup>, Shiehafiel Fieqri Hussin<sup>5</sup>, Roslinda Abu Sopian<sup>1</sup>, Nurul Syarbani Eliana Musa<sup>1</sup>, Mohamed Paid Yusof<sup>3</sup>

1 National Institutes of Health (NIH), Ministry of Health, Malaysia  
2 Institute for Health Systems Research, NIH, Ministry of Health, Malaysia  
3 Petaling District Health Office, Selangor, Ministry of Health, Malaysia  
4 Institute for Public Health, NIH, Ministry of Health, Malaysia  
5 Ministry of Health, Malaysia

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## INTRODUCTION

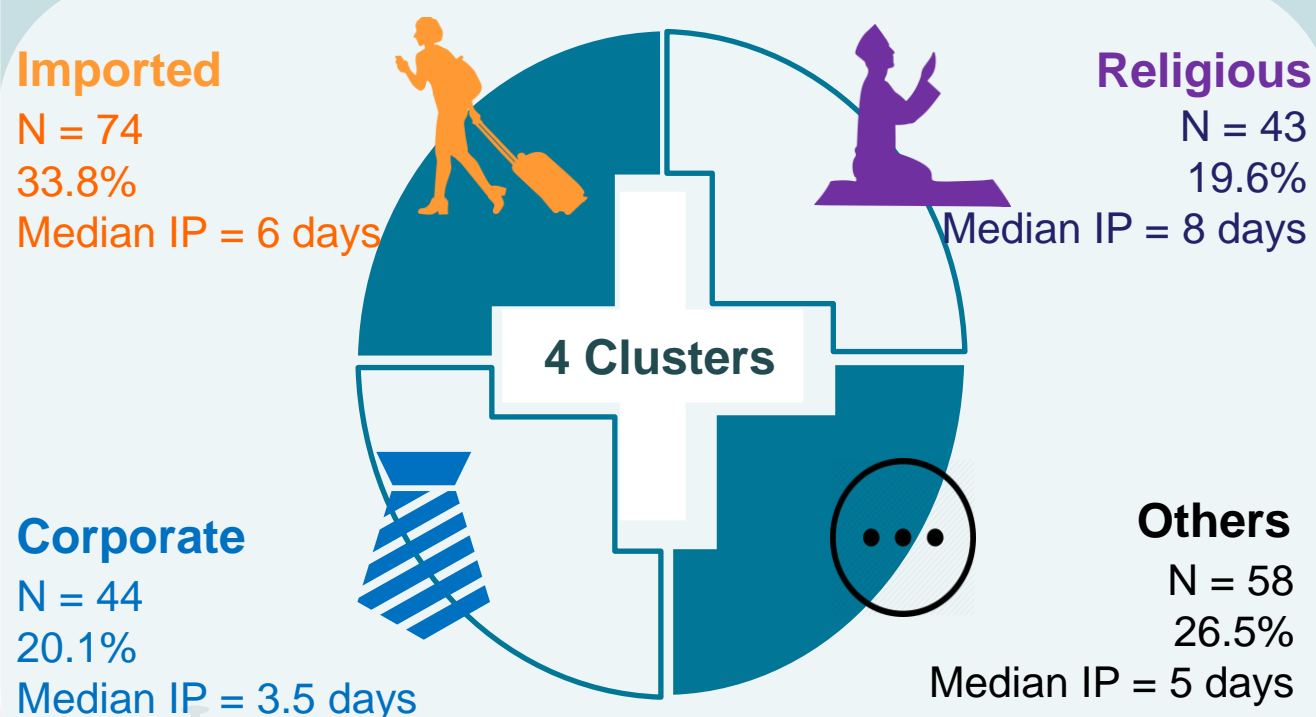
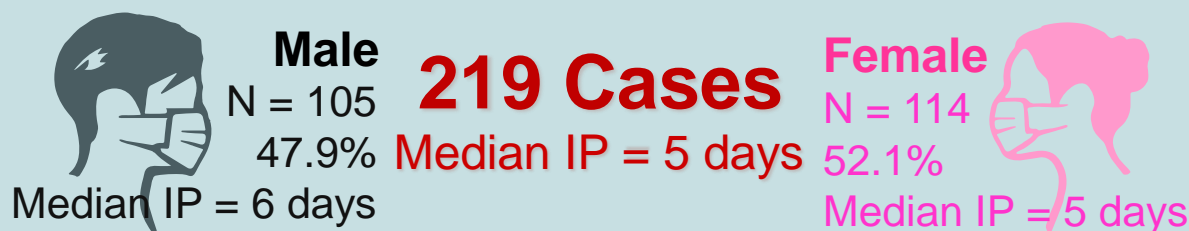
- Globally, over 2 million population have been affected by the COVID-19 outbreak and over five thousand in Malaysia, with almost 100 deaths as of 22 April 2020.
- Knowledge on the **incubation period (IP)** of COVID-19 is scarce due to the novelty of the virus.
- The aim of this study was to **determine the IP of COVID-19** infection in the district of Petaling, Selangor, Malaysia.

## MATERIALS & METHODS

- A cross-sectional study was conducted between 3 February 2020 and 13 April 2020 by using secondary data from the Petaling District Health Office.
- The **IP** was classified as the **time elapsed between exposure to a confirmed case and the date of onset of symptoms**.
- The Kruskal-Wallis test was performed to compare the differences of IP between the groups.

## RESULTS

- A total of **219 cases** were included in this study. Four main clusters were identified; **corporate** (n=44, 20.1%), **religious** (n=43, 19.6%), **imported** (n=74, 33.8%) and **others** (n=58, 26.5%).
- The **median IP** of COVID-19 among the cases was **5.0 days** (interquartile range 3.0-8.0).
- The **longest median IP** was found in **religious cluster** (8.0 days, IQR 4.0-11.0), while the shortest median was corporate cluster (3.5 days, IQR 3.0-6.8).
- Significant **difference** was observed between **corporate** and **religious** clusters (p=0.001) (Table 1).



**Table 1:**  
The median incubation period of COVID-19 by clusters

Cluster	n	Median	IQR	X2 statistic* (df)	p
Corporate <sup>a</sup>	44	3.5	3.0 – 6.8	15.2(3)	0.002
Religious <sup>b</sup>	43	8.0	4.0 – 11.0		
Imported <sup>c</sup>	74	6.0	3.8 – 8.0		
Others <sup>d</sup>	58	5.0	3.8 – 8.0		

\*Kruskal Wallis test

Post Hoc tests: <sup>ab</sup>p = 0.001; <sup>ac</sup>p = 0.153; <sup>ad</sup>p = 0.478; <sup>bc</sup>p = 0.203; <sup>bd</sup>p = 0.100; <sup>cd</sup>p = 1.00

## DISCUSSION / CONCLUSION

- The median IP of COVID-19 of 5 days is within the range of IP estimated by the World Health Organization.
- A higher infecting dose as well as higher virulence of the strain could possibly lead to a shorter IP.
- Based on the longest median incubation period in our study (cluster religious), medical observation or quarantine period should be of a minimum of 8 days to halt the spread of disease.
- Therefore, our recommendation is to maintain current practice of quarantine of 14 days which will suffice to curb the spread of disease.



### Acknowledgements

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### References

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