Teacher confirmed as first French coronavirus death

February 26 2020

Credit: CC0 Public Domain

A 60-year-old teacher who died in Paris after falling ill with the new coronavirus has become the first French casualty of the illness, health officials said Wednesday, adding he had not travelled to an outbreak hotspot.

The man died overnight in a hospital in the capital, bringing the

coronavirus death toll in the country to two, said the ministry's deputy head Jerome Salomon.

The first victim was an 80-year-old Chinese tourist who died in hospital mid-February.

The teacher, who worked at a junior high school in the town of Crepy-en-Valois, about 80 kilometres (50 miles) northeast of Paris, had not travelled to an area considered a hotspot of the global coronavirus outbreak, said Etienne Champion, director general of the health agency of the Hauts-de-France region.

After feeling unwell, he stopped work on February 12—at the start of the mid-term school holidays. He was tested for the coronavirus in the emergency ward of a Paris hospital on Tuesday and died shortly afterwards.

Apart from the teacher, France has reported four other new cases of COVID-19 in the past 24 hours—including two people returning from the Lombardy region of Italy, at the centre of Europe's biggest outbreak of the disease.

Eleven people have recovered from the virus in France, bringing the total of diagnosed cases in the country to 17.

Tourists confined

Among the four still in hospital, a 55-year-old man from the same region as the teacher was in a serious condition, said Champion.

"Investigations are under way to determine the source of the two infections," he told journalists, and said people who had been in contact with the two—including medical staff—were being monitored.

More than 2,700 people worldwide have died of COVID-19 so far, and almost 80,000 have been infected, mainly in China.

Meanwhile, 30 tourists have been confined to their hotel in the Burgundy town of Beaune after the as-yet unexplained death of a tourist from Hong Kong, the regional health department said.

The department said a tour group, which had been due to travel to Paris Wednesday, was being kept at the Ibis hotel while tests are carried out "to banish all suspicion of a case of coronavirus".

In the French Riviera town of Nice, not far from the Italy border, officials cancelled the final day—Saturday—of the annual carnival, the country's largest, as a "precautionary" measure against coronavirus spread.

Even as a March 7 Six Nations match between Italy and Ireland in Dublin was cancelled, France's Health Minister Olivier Veran insisted there was no reason to postpone Wednesday's Champion's League clash between Italian side Juventus and Lyon in central France.

"No sick person has been identified in Turin, nor in the region," Veran said on BFM TV. "There is no reason to prevent Turin supporters from coming."

The French government has asked citizens returning from Lombardy and the neighbouring Veneto region of Italy to avoid "all non-essential outings" and keep their children home from school.

The same recommendations have been issued for people returning from mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore and South Korea.

© 2020 AFP

Citation: Teacher confirmed as first French coronavirus death (2020, February 26) retrieved 7 May 2024 from https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-02-teacher-french-coronavirus-victim.html

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.