

WHO backpedals on claim that asymptomatic transmission of new coronavirus is rare

June 10 2020



(HealthDay)—A claim that transmission of the COVID-19-causing coronavirus by people without symptoms is "very rare" was quickly reversed by the World Health Organization.

That assertion was made Monday at a media briefing by WHO official Maria Van Kerkhove, M.D. On Tuesday, she said the statement was based on just two or three studies and that it was a "misunderstanding" to say that transmission by people without symptoms is rare, *The New York Times* reported. "I was just responding to a question, I wasn't stating a policy of WHO or anything like that," she said.

The WHO was criticized for causing confusion about such an important public health issue. "All of the best evidence suggests that people without symptoms can and do readily spread severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2, the virus that causes COVID-19," according to a statement released Tuesday by scientists at the Harvard Global Health Institute, *The Times* reported. "Communicating preliminary data about key aspects of the coronavirus without much context can have tremendous negative impact on how the public and [policy makers](#) respond to the pandemic," the statement warned.

A study published in April suggested that people who have the new coronavirus are most infectious about two days before symptoms appear and estimated that 44 percent of new infections are a result of [transmission](#) from people without symptoms, *The Times* reported.

More information: [The New York Times Article](#)

Copyright © 2020 [HealthDay](#). All rights reserved.

Citation: WHO backpedals on claim that asymptomatic transmission of new coronavirus is rare (2020, June 10) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-06-backpedals->

[asymptomatic-transmission-coronavirus-rare.html](https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.03.26.20076531v1)

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.