

Inter-hospital transfer of SARS patients

HA SARS 25/03

6 August 2003

SARS Expert Committee
Request for Submissions from Hospital Authority (HA)

The SARS Expert Committee has requested for information on Inter-hospital transfer of patients (Paragraph 1 (e) in Annex to letter of 21 July 2003 from Secretary, SARS Expert Committee):

"Please provide an account of infected control issues surrounding the inter-hospital transfer of patients, including the number of cases involved SARS infection during inter hospital transfer of patients."

The HA hereby submits the following response:

As at 3 August 2003, there were 836 inter-hospital transfers among HA hospitals for confirmed SARS patients.

Inter-hospital transfers are carried out by:

1. The Ambulance of the Fire Services Department (FSD): For transfer to acute hospitals (ie hospital with Accident and Emergency Departments)
2. The Non Emergency Ambulance Transfer Service of the HA (NEATS): For transfer to non acute hospitals.

The infection control measures for NEATS vehicles and crew members followed strictly the HA guideline on SARS. Cohort practices were implemented throughout the transfer operation. Patients at different risk categories of SARS i.e. confirmed SARS, suspected SARS and contact cases under quarantine were not allowed to be mixed in the same vehicle in the guideline.

Hospital Authority
30 July 2003