SARS-CoV-2 in Romania – situation update and containment strategies

*Adrian Streinu-Cercel**

With the rapidly changing outbreak of SARS-CoV-2 (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus), Romania has recently joined the growing number of European countries reporting cases of novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19), with three confirmed patients as of 02 March 2020.

Starting in January 2020, Romania has deployed a national program for the surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 circulation, establishing a network of infectious diseases hospitals designated to receive potential COVID-19 patients, and to ensure their diagnosis and treatment.

The diagnostic capacity has been strengthened by nominating 5 university clinics throughout the country, which receive samples, apply diagnostic PCR for SARS-CoV-2, and communicate the results to the National Institute of Public Health in a timely manner.

The growing body of evidence available both locally and globally is used to dynamically inform and transform the measures taken to prevent and combat the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in Romania.

To date, 475 PCR tests have been performed nationwide, leading to the identification of 3 confirmed cases – one asymptomatic patient, and two cases of clinical disease. Of these two COVID-19 cases, one had minor disease, and one had medium-severe disease, presenting an onset with elements suggestive for acute respiratory failure, but with good subsequent evolution.

So far, we have not identified community transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in Romania, all three cases having an epidemiological link to Italy: the first case had come in contact with an Italian citizen with COVID-19 who visited Romania, and the other two cases both had a recent history of travel to Italy.

Surveillance activities continue, with contacts of these 3 cases having tested negative so far, but still being quarantined, for a total duration of 14 days since the occurrence of the last exposure.

All travelers returning from areas of extended community transmission of SARS-CoV-2, regardless of the continent, are placed in institutional quarantine, while those retuning from other areas of SARS-CoV-2 circulation are placed in voluntary isolation at home.

Institutional quarantine in state-mandated facilities and voluntary isolation both last for 14 days. For persons who are quarantined, PCR testing for SARS-CoV-2 is performed at the beginning of the quarantine, and in the 12th and 13th day of quarantine. If the last two tests are both negative, the person can exit quarantine after the 14th day.

For persons who are under voluntary isolation at home, clinical monitoring includes a daily telephone contact with the doctors from the regional Public Health Direction. They are tested by PCR for SARS-CoV-2 if they develop any symptoms during the 14 days of isolation.

At the current moment, 42 people are being quarantined, and another 9012 people are under voluntary home isolation. Coordinated containment efforts continue nationwide.

Conflicts of interest: None to declare.
Funding: None to declare for this manuscript.

*MD, PhD, Professor, Department of Infectious Diseases I, Carol Davila University of Medicine and Pharmacy, National Institute for Infectious Diseases "Prof. Dr. Matei Balş", No. 1 Dr. Calistrat Grozovici street, 021105 Bucharest, Romania. astreinucercel@yahoo.com

Article downloaded from www.germs.ro
Published March 2020
© GERMS 2020
ISSN 2248 – 2997
ISSN – L = 2248 – 2997

Please cite this article as:
Streinu-Cercel A. SARS-CoV-2 in Romania – situation update and containment strategies.
GERMS 2020;10(1):8. doi:
10.18683/germs.2020.1179