

Special Issue

Bats and Coronaviruses

Message from the Guest Editors

During the past two decades, three high pathogenic coronaviruses have been identified as the causal agents of large-scale disease outbreaks—SARS-CoV-1, MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV-2—that have claimed tens of thousands of human lives. One of the shared characters between these three viruses is that they all probably originated in bats, which firmly establishes that bats are an important source of highly lethal zoonotic viruses. Thus, it is highly likely that future SARS-like coronavirus outbreaks will originate from bats. While it is almost impossible to predict or prevent the next coronavirus outbreak, we believe that active surveillance is the best we can do at the present time to provide early warnings and, in turn, minimize the impact of such future outbreaks. In this regard, global efforts on the discovery and active surveillance of bat coronaviruses, and on understanding of the relationship between bats and coronaviruses are urgently needed. This is also within the scope of this Special Issue “Bats and Coronaviruses”.

Guest Editor

Co-

Guest Editors

Prof. Dr. Peng Zhou

1. Guangzhou Laboratory, Guangzhou, China
2. Wuhan Institute of Virology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Wuhan, China

Dr. Danielle E. Anderson

Department of Microbiology and Immunology, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia

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Editorial Office
MDPI, Grosspeteranlage 5
4052 Basel, Switzerland
Tel: +41 61 683 77 34
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Editor-in-Chief

Dr. Eric O. Freed

HIV Dynamics and Replication Program, Center for Cancer Research,
National Cancer Institute, Frederick, MD 21702-1201, USA

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