Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)

Merlin disease code: 07982 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)
Specimens for all cases must be sent to the Bureau of Public Health Laboratories

Paper case report form required
No Merlin extended data

Clinical criteria for case classification

Early illness:
- Presence of two or more of the following: fever (might be subjective), chills, rigors, myalgia, headache, diarrhea, sore throat, rhinorrhea.

Mild-to-moderate respiratory illness:
- Temperature of >100.4º F (>38º C)
- And one or more clinical findings of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing).

Severe respiratory illness:
- Meets clinical criteria of mild-to-moderate respiratory illness
- And one or more of the following findings:
  - Radiographic evidence of pneumonia,
  - Or Acute respiratory distress syndrome,
  - Or Autopsy findings consistent with pneumonia or acute respiratory distress syndrome without an identifiable cause.

Laboratory criteria for case classification

Tests to detect SARS-CoV are being refined, and their performance characteristics assessed; therefore, criteria for laboratory diagnosis of SARS-CoV are changing. One or more of the following are the general criteria for laboratory confirmation of SARS-CoV:
- Detection of serum antibody to SARS-CoV by a test validated by CDC (e.g., enzyme immunoassay [EIA]),
- Or isolation in cell culture of SARS-CoV from a clinical specimen,
- Or detection of SARS-CoV RNA by a reverse-transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) test validated by CDC and with subsequent confirmation in a reference laboratory (e.g., CDC).

Epidemiological criteria for case classification

Possible exposure to SARS-associated coronavirus (SARS-CoV):
One or more of the following exposures in the 10 days before onset of symptoms:
- Travel to a foreign or domestic location with documented or suspected recent transmission of SARS-CoV
- Or close contact with a person with mild-to-moderate or severe respiratory illness and with history of travel in the 10 days before onset of symptoms to a foreign or domestic location with documented or suspected recent transmission of SARS-CoV.
Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) (Continued)

Likely exposure to SARS-CoV:
One or more of the following exposures in the 10 days before onset of symptoms:
- Close contact with a confirmed case of SARS-CoV disease
- Or close contact with a person with mild-moderate or severe respiratory illness for whom a chain of transmission can be linked to a confirmed case of SARS-CoV disease in the 10 days before onset of symptoms.

Exclusion criteria
A person may be excluded as a SARS report under investigation (SARS RUI), including as a CDC-defined probable SARS-CoV case, if one or more of the following applies:
- An alternative diagnosis can explain the illness fully.
- Antibody to SARS-CoV is undetectable in a serum specimen obtained >28 days after onset of illness.
- The case was reported on the basis of contact with a person who was excluded subsequently as a case of SARS-CoV disease; then the reported case also is excluded, provided other epidemiologic or laboratory criteria are not present.

Case classification

SARS Report Under Investigation (RUI)
- Reports in persons from areas where SARS is not known to be active:
  - SARS RUI-1: Patients with severe illness compatible with SARS in groups likely to be first affected by SARS-CoV7 if SARS-CoV is introduced from a person without clear epidemiologic links to known cases of SARS-CoV disease or places with known ongoing transmission of SARS-CoV.
- Reports in persons from areas where SARS activity is occurring:
  - SARS RUI-2: Patients who meet the current clinical criteria for mild-to-moderate illness and the epidemiologic criteria for possible exposure (spring 2003 CDC definition for suspect cases).
  - SARS RUI-3: Patients who meet the current clinical criteria for severe illness and the epidemiologic criteria for possible exposure (spring 2003 CDC definition for probable cases).
  - SARS RUI-4: Patients who meet the clinical criteria for early or mild-moderate illness and the epidemiologic criteria for likely exposure to SARS-CoV.

SARS-CoV disease classification
Confirmed:
A clinically compatible illness (i.e., early, mild-to-moderate, or severe) in a person with laboratory criteria.

Probable:
A person who meets the clinical criteria for severe respiratory illness and the epidemiologic criteria for likely exposure to SARS-CoV.
Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) (Continued)

Criteria to distinguish a new case from previous reports
Not applicable.

Comments
Information regarding the current criteria for laboratory diagnosis of SARS-CoV is available at www.cdc.gov/sars/index.html.