

Letter to the Editor: Who was the first doctor to report the Covid-19 outbreak in Wuhan, China?

We read with great interest the recent publication entitled “Dr. Li Wenliang and the Time of COVID-19” [1]. As mentioned in this article, Dr. Li was reprimanded initially for “disrupting public order” in China when he first reported the outbreak in Wuhan. As a matter of fact, On Dec 30, 2019, Dr. Li warned in an online chat group on WeChat that he had seen a report showing positive test results of SARS for seven patients. However, he did not formally report the outbreak to the authorities.

Dr. Zhang Jixian is considered the first doctor to report the novel coronavirus before its outbreak. A senior couple living in the residential community near Dr. Zhang's hospital went to see her for their fever and cough on Dec 26, 2019. By observing their CT thorax images, Dr. Zhang found differences from pneumonia caused by common viruses and asked the couple to have their son examined in the hospital. She found the CT image of his lung was similar to his parents. That day, a patient from Huanan Seafood Market in Wuhan who had a fever and cough also had a similar CT image of the lung.

"Usually, a family comes to the hospital and there is little chance for all the family members to have the same disease except for infectious diseases." said Dr. Zhang who gave the couple's family

and the patient from the seafood market tests denying the possibility of flu.

As the situation continued to confuse Zhang, she reported it to the head of the hospital on Dec 27 and the hospital then reported it to Center for Disease Control(CDC) in the Jiangnan district of Wuhan. Epidemiological investigations and tests were arranged quickly by CDC. Within two days, the hospital continued to receive more similar patients, and Dr. Zhang promptly reported to the hospital. Before the CDC expert group paid attention to this epidemic, Dr. Zhang had set up a nine-bed isolation ward for the patients and taken measures to isolate them. She also bought 30 pieces of canvas as protective clothing. “If it is delivered uniformly by the hospital, it needs to be customized” she said, “if it is online shopping, they can receive the goods very quickly.”

At 1:00 p.m. on Dec 29, the vice president of the hospital reported directly to the disease control department of the provincial and municipal health and Health Commission. Although Dec 29 is not a working day, but the provincial and municipal health commission disease control department immediately responded to the report, came to the hospital to formally began the epidemiological investigation.

At 15:10 on Dec 30, Wuhan Municipal Health and Health

Commission issued the official document "emergency notice on reporting the treatment of pneumonia of unknown causes". This notice requires to do a good job in the treatment of pneumonia of unknown causes, and comprehensively carry out the search and investigation of cases of pneumonia of unknown causes. Not only was Dr. Zhang the first to sound an alarm for epidemic prevention and control, but she was also the "leader" of hospital rescue work, always putting the interests of the party and people first. By early February, miraculously, none of Dr. Zhang's team had been infected in wuhan, where the outbreak was most severe.

Therefore, Dr. Zhang was the first to report the novel coronavirus, Dr. Li just blew the whistle. Both of them are worth remembering.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflicts of interest associated with the material presented in this paper.

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