

- Virus

Expert: Delta manifested by sneezing, allergy symptoms

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Unlike the symptoms of the original COVID-19, the manifestations of the Delta variant are similar to allergies, an expert from the World Health Organization (WHO) said Monday night.

WHO digital health expert and Takeda medical director Melvin Sanicas said symptoms of Delta variant are “different from that of SARS-CoV-2,” the virus that causes COVID-19.

“There has been a shift in symptoms. At the moment, we see that Delta variant has more allergic symptoms like sneezing and runny nose,” he said during a forum organized by PhilSTAR and PhilSTAR Life.

Aside from this, Delta variant patients usually do not experience loss of smell and taste, which are the most indicative symptoms of the original COVID-19.

“We are not entirely sure if this is because of Delta variant or concomitant like, for instance, they have fever. Not sure but we are seeing this trend that there are allergic symptoms,” Sanicas added.

Likewise, Department of Health (DOH)-Technical Advisory Group member Anna Liza OngLim insisted that senior citizens and those with comorbidities should be the priorities for COVID-19 vaccination.

Rapid increase

Some local government units (LGUs) in the National Capital Region, Cavite, Laguna, Bulacan, Pampanga and Bukidnon have recorded a rapid increase in new COVID-19 cases over the past week, according to the OCTA Research Group.

Citing data from the DOH, OCTA said NCR recorded an average of 2,189 new cases per day from Aug. 3 to 9, up 41 percent from the 1,553 daily new cases in the preceding week.

The emergency field hospitals (EFHs) of the Philippine Red Cross at the National Kidney and Transplant Institute (NKTI) and the Lung Center of the Philippines (LCP) are nearing full capacity due to the surge of COVID-19 cases, according to PRC chairman Sen. Richard Gordon.

But Gordon assured the public that PRC “will be ramping up its EFH operation and plans of extending it are in the works” and ordered the deployment of 100-bed EFH at LCP and 20-bed capacity at NKTI. The field hospital is equipped with medical equipment such as oxygen tanks, ECG machine, PPV and intubation set, automated external defibrillator and other basic ward facilities to serve mild to moderate cases. To ensure proper ventilation, there are air-conditioning units.

Meanwhile, Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) Secretary Mark Villar inspected the newly built offsite hospital at the LCP compound.

“I am grateful and thankful for all those involved who helped this much-needed hospital facility completed,” Villar said.

For her part, Vice President Leni Robredo yesterday said government must further “recalibrate its efforts” to address the pandemic amid the more infectious Delta variant.

“We really need to recalibrate our efforts now because the Delta variant is a game-changer. With the new information about the Delta variant, it seems that the previous recommendations no longer apply. So there’s really a need to recalibrate,” Robredo told CNN Philippines. – With Janvic Mateo, Neil Jayson Servallos, Jose Rodel Clapano