

# ASEAN Biodiaspora Virtual Center Media Monitoring for Infectious and Emerging Diseases

GLOBAL & ASEAN REGION

New Bat Coronavirus Discovered In China

February 25, 2025



With Support by:  
Canada Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency bluedot

This report is based on media monitoring of infectious and emerging diseases globally and within ASEAN Member States. To enhance pandemic and epidemic preparedness and response in the ASEAN Region, we publish this report three times a week.

## Event Description

On February 18, 2025, Chinese researchers have identified HKU5-CoV-2, a new bat merbecovirus related to MERS, with potential to infect humans, according to a study published in the journal *Cell* [[Full article](#)]. The newer coronavirus is known as HKU5-CoV-2 and is a type of merbecovirus, which is the same family of another coronavirus known to infect humans called Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). The virus was isolated from *Pipistrellus* bats collected in Guangdong Province, China.



Source: <https://abcnews.go.com/Health/new-coronavirus-found-bats-concern-public-health->

HKU5-CoV was first detected in bats in 2006 and is prevalent in *Pipistrellus abramus* bats in eastern and southern Asia [[Full article](#)]. Lab tests showed that HKU5-CoV-2 can enter cells via the ACE2 receptor, similar to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, and NL63, the virus causing a common cold. The virus infected human cells with high ACE2 levels in test tubes and mini models of airways and intestines, suggesting a potential spillover risk [[Full article](#)].

Researchers noted that **HKU5-CoV-2 is less efficient at entering human cells than SARS-CoV-2, stating that its emergence risk should not be overstated. No animal studies assessed its disease-causing potential or transmissibility** [[Full article](#)].



## Statement from US-CDC

On Monday, February 24, 2025, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) stated that **the new coronavirus found in bats is currently not a cause for concern**. The publication referenced demonstrates that the bat virus can use a human protein to enter cells in the laboratory, but they have not detected infections in humans [[Full article](#)].

Federal health agency stated that there is no reason to believe the virus poses a threat to public health at the moment and no infections have been detected in humans. As the researchers found that the virus did not enter human cells as readily as the SARS-CoV-2, risk of emergence in human populations should not be exaggerated [[Full article](#)].

## Reference

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