

IMS COVID-19: STYLE & TERMINOLOGY GUIDE

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TERM	EXPLANATION	EXAMPLE OF USE
CORONAVIRUS / CORONAVIRUSES	<p>A family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or humans. In humans, several coronaviruses are known to cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). Novel coronavirus is the most recently discovered coronavirus (see novel coronavirus).</p>	<p>“Novel coronavirus is one of many coronaviruses.”</p>
COVID-19	<p>The illness that can result from infection with novel coronavirus. This illness ranges from mild flu-like symptoms to a dry cough, severe fever, head and body aches, problems with breathing, stomach pains and a loss of smell and taste. In a minority of cases this can lead to death from pneumonia and organ failure, particularly in the elderly and people who already have other illnesses that weaken their body’s immune systems. It is possible that some people infected with novel coronavirus may not experience any symptoms.</p>	<p>“Covid-19” is used when specifically referring to people who have shown the symptoms associated with Covid-19. E.g. “S/he is in hospital because s/he has Covid-19”, or “the hospital is treating people with Covid-19”. “The number of Covid-19 cases...” when this refers specifically to people known to have had the symptoms associated with Covid-19. “Deaths caused by Covid-19” or “Covid-19-related deaths” when referring specifically to the numbers of people who died as a result of illness caused by novel coronavirus,</p>

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The pandemic resulting from the rapid spread of novel coronavirus around the world (see “pandemic” below).

“Covid-19 pandemic” can be shortened to “Covid-19” when referring to the pandemic and the response to it. E.g. “IMS partners’ coverage of Covid-19”.

NOVEL CORONAVIRUS

The respiratory virus that causes Covid-19. Officially called SARS-CoV-2, novel coronavirus is a new type of coronavirus that was not previously known or understood by health experts. Novel coronavirus is easily spread from one person to another.

“Novel coronavirus” is used when specifically referring to infections and efforts to prevent these. E.g. “The number of novel coronavirus infections rose to...”, or “the number of novel coronavirus cases” when referring specifically to the number of people who are known to have been infected with the novel coronavirus (see “tests” below). “The government’s effort to prevent the spread of novel coronavirus”.

PANDEMIC

The worldwide spread of a new illness.

“The Covid-19 pandemic.”

TESTS, TESTING

There are two types of test that detect infection with novel coronavirus – i.e. they test for the virus not the illness the virus can cause (Covid-19). One test identifies the presence of novel coronavirus itself and shows that someone is infected and therefore is likely to be infectious to other people. The other tests for anti-bodies produced by the body when it is infected with novel coronavirus. This shows if someone has had the virus, even if they are no longer ill, and therefore indicates possible immunity to further infection.

“They tested positive for novel coronavirus”.
“They went for a novel coronavirus test.”
They were able to go back to work because tests showed they had developed immunity to the novel coronavirus.”

AN EXAMPLE OF REPORTING TO AVOID

“One reason the state’s role has changed so rapidly is that covid-19 spreads like wildfire

Covid-19 doesn’t spread. It’s the novel coronavirus, which causes Covid-19 that spreads.

In less than four months it has gone from a market in Wuhan to almost every country in the world.

Again, it’s the virus (novel coronavirus) not the illness it causes (Covid-19) that incubated in the Wuhan marketplace where the virus is believed to have first passed from animals to humans.

The past week logged 253,000 new cases.”

It is not clear whether these are cases of people who have tested positive for novel coronavirus, or people who have fallen ill with Covid-19, or people who have been hospitalised with severe Covid-19 symptoms, or people who have died because of Covid-19.

The Economist, March 28-April 3, leader section (p9) ‘Everything’s under control’:

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