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April 27, 2020

# SARS-CoV-2 Found in Aerosols in Hospital Staff Areas, Public Places; Guidelines Issued on Protecting Healthcare Workers

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New findings, published in *Nature*, add to the evidence indicating that SARS-CoV-2 can persist in aerosol samples.

Researchers in Wuhan measured SARS-CoV-2 RNA concentrations in aerosol samples taken from 30 sites inside two hospitals dedicated to treating COVID-19, as well as from several public areas. Among the findings:

- *Patient areas:* Viral RNA concentrations generally were very low or undetectable in patient areas (e.g., ICUs, coronary care unit), except in a patient mobile toilet room, which was not ventilated.
- *Medical staff areas:* Some sites — including rooms where personal protective equipment was removed — had high SARS-CoV-2 RNA levels; these levels became undetectable after better sanitization procedures were implemented.
- *Public areas:* Two areas that got a lot of foot traffic — the entrance to a department store and a site next to one of the hospitals — had high viral RNA concentrations.

The researchers conclude: "Although we have not established the infectivity of the virus detected in these hospital areas, we propose that SARS-CoV-2 may have the potential to be transmitted via aerosols. Our results indicate that room ventilation, open space, sanitization of protective apparel, and proper use and disinfection of toilet areas can effectively limit the concentration of SARS-CoV-2 RNA in aerosols."

Elsewhere, the Infectious Diseases Society of America has issued new guidelines on infection prevention among healthcare personnel caring for COVID-19 patients. Available at the second link below, the guidance includes recommendations on reusing personal protective equipment like N95 respirators.

## LINK(S):

[Nature article](#) (Free PDF)

[IDSA guidelines](#) (Free)

[NEJM Journal Watch COVID-19 page](#) (Free)

[NEJM COVID-19 page](#) (Free)