CLASSIFICATION OF COVID-19 DEATH FOR NATIONAL COVID-19 DEATH STATISTICS MINISTRY OF HEALTH MALAYSIA

1. Introduction

The first case of COVID-19 deaths in Malaysia was recorded on 17 March 2020. At that time, the criteria used for COVID-19 deaths that were announced at the national level and being included in the National COVID-19 Death Statistics was the death of a person with laboratory confirmation (i.e. RT-PCR) of COVID-19 infection, irrespective of clinical signs and symptoms.

Effective November 1, 2020, in line with the COVID-19 Death Classification Guidelines issued by the World Health Organization (WHO) on April 16, 2020, COVID-19 deaths in Malaysia are classified as "Death Due to COVID-19" or “Death with COVID-19”.

2. Purpose

Accurate classification of COVID-19 death is important to ensure that COVID-19 death statistics in Malaysia comply with WHO Guidelines as applied by other countries internationally.

The criteria for the classification of COVID-19 death have been developed and established as a result of discussions and consensuses from Infectious Diseases Medical Specialists and also Forensic Medical Specialists of the Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH) together with the National Committee of COVID-19 Mortality Review.

3. Criteria for the classification of "Death Due to COVID-19"

3.1 Criteria for inpatient/hospital:

3.1.1 COVID-19 positive case that has been confirmed through laboratory tests (RT-PCR or similar);
3.1.2 Death resulting from clinically compatible disease;
3.1.3 No clear alternative cause of death that is not related to COVID-19 infection (examples: death due to trauma, road traffic accident, suicide, etc.);
3.1.4 No period of complete recovery from COVID-19 between illness and death; and
3.1.5 Even with pre-existing disease (e.g. cancer), it is death due to COVID-19 if the reason for the severe course is due to COVID-19 infection.
3.2 Brought in Dead (BID) case criteria:

3.2.1 If a post mortem is conducted, the classification of COVID-19 death shall be in accordance with the autopsy death report.

3.2.2 If the autopsy is not performed, the death of COVID-19 must meet the following criteria:
   a. COVID-19 positive case that has been confirmed through laboratory test (RT-PCR) with CT value; and
   b. Has an epidemiological chain (according to the Epidemiology Link criteria for COVID-19 cases).

3.2.3 Supportive radiological investigation (if any) (examples: chest x-ray, post mortem CT scan, etc.), which shows signs of COVID-19 infection can be used as a supportive modality for the specialist in charge depending on the local and current situations. However, it is not a criterion that must be met for the confirmation of "Death Due to COVID-19".


COVID-19 related deaths that do NOT meet the criteria in paragraph 3 would be classified as "Death with COVID-19" instead of "Death Due to COVID-19". These deaths are not included in the National COVID-19 Mortality Statistics.

5. Management and Reporting of COVID-19 Related Death

Management of COVID-19 Related Death at Public Hospitals is shown in Appendix 1, whereas the Management of COVID-19 Related Death at The Private Healthcare Facility is as in Appendix 2.

References:

MANAGEMENT OF COVID-19 RELATED DEATH AT THE PUBLIC HEALTHCARE FACILITY

COVID-19 related Death

Death Due to COVID-19

Brought-In-Dead (BID)

Death in Hospital

Meets the criteria for the classification of "Death Due to COVID-19":

1. If a post-mortem is conducted, the classification of COVID-19 death shall be in accordance with the autopsy death report.
2. If the autopsy is not performed, the death of COVID-19 must meet the following criteria:
   a. COVID-19 positive case that has been confirmed through laboratory test (RT-PCR) with CT value; and
   b. Has an epidemiological link.
3. Supportive radiological investigation (if any)

Meets the criteria for the classification of Death Due to COVID-19:

1. COVID-19 positive case that has been confirmed through laboratory tests (RT-PCR or similar);
2. Death resulting from clinically compatible disease;
3. No clear alternative cause of death that is not related to COVID-19 infection (examples: death due to trauma, road traffic accident, suicide, etc.);
4. No period of complete recovery from COVID-19 between illness and death; and
5. Even with pre-existing disease (e.g. cancer), it is death due to COVID-19 if the reason for the severe course is due to COVID-19 infection

Report to the in-charge officer (PIC) / Liaison Officer (LO) for the death of COVID-19 in a hospital / institution (UKA /Quality) / HI DHO

24 hours

Report to CPRC Hospital Management / Clinical Audit Unit using the summary according to the PowerPoint template provided

The Clinical Audit Unit will review the case summary and confirm the Case Index Number provided by the National CPRC

24 hours

Report to PIC / LO for COVID-19 death case at State Health Department (State CPRC)

PIC / LO JKN notify the case to the Nationality CPRC for the verification of Case Index Number

24 hours

Cases of death confirmed positive for COVID-19 through laboratory tests but the cause of death was not due to COVID-19 infection.

1. Ensure that mortality studies at the hospital level are being carried out.
2. Submit the mortality study report to the Clinical Audit Unit, Medical Care Quality Section, Medical Development Division, Ministry of Health Malaysia.
CONFIRMED COVID-19 DEATH IN HOSPITAL
(Confirmed via laboratory investigation)
Body preparation (Refer Annex 20)

Emergency Department

Cause of Death (COD)

Determined

May release the body with COVID-19 Protocol (Refer Annex 20) with the advice of Health Inspector from the District Health Office

Undetermined

Make a Police Report (Ref. Annex 20)

Post Mortem

Refer Government Hospital with Forensic Services via phone with letter provided (Ref. Annex 20)

Transportation of the body to the Government Hospital by police with the assistance of Hospital Personnel (UKA) (to call UKA of receiving hospital)

Burial organizes by the family member with the assistance of/ consultation by the Health Inspector from the District Health Office

Report the COVID-19 Related Death to the Clinical Audit Unit, Medical Care Quality Section, Medical Development Division, Ministry of Health

Ward

Cause of Death (COD) determined

Mortuary

May release the body with COVID-19 Protocol (Ref. Annex 20) with the advice of Health Inspector from the District Health Office

Post Mortem (Not required)

May release the body with COVID-19 Protocol (Ref. Annex 20) with the advice of Health Inspector from the District Health Office

Burial organizes by the family member with the assistance of/ consultation by the Health Inspector from the District Health Office