CLASSIFICATION OF COVID-19 DEATH FOR NATIONAL COVID-19
DEATH STATISTICS MINISTRY OF HEALTH MALAYSIA
(Updated on 14 March 2022)

1. Introduction

The first case of COVID-19 death 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 Specialists and Forensic Specialists in the Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH) together with the National Committee of COVID-19 Mortality Review.

3. Definition of Term

3.1 Inpatient
- Refers to a patient who stays in hospital while under treatment or reaches the hospital alive

3.2 Brought-in-dead (BID)
- Refers to a patient who was brought into hospital without any recordable vital signs suggesting life as verified by the attending physician
4. Classification of "Death Due to COVID-19"

4.1 Criteria for Inpatient:

4.1.1 COVID-19 positive case that has been confirmed through laboratory tests (RTPCR/ RTK/ confirmatory test which has been recognized by the State);

4.1.2 Death resulting from clinically compatible disease;

4.1.3 No clear alternative cause of death that is not related to COVID-19 infection (examples: death due to trauma, road traffic accident, suicide, etc.);

4.1.4 No period of complete recovery from COVID-19 between illness and death;

4.1.5 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; and

4.1.6 Death of a positive case within 30 days from a positive result.

4.2 Criteria for Brought-in-dead (BID):

4.2.1 If a postmortem is conducted, the classification of COVID-19 death shall be in accordance with the autopsy death report (Gold Standard).

4.2.2 If the autopsy is not performed, death due to COVID-19 must meet the following criteria:
   a. COVID-19 positive case that has been confirmed through laboratory test (RTPCR/ Gene Expert/ confirmatory test which has been recognized by the State) with CT value (if the CT value is available);
   b. Has an epidemiological chain (according to the Epidemiology Link criteria for COVID-19 cases);
   c. Supportive Clinical History (if available);
   d. Supportive radiological investigation (where applicable) (examples: chest x-ray, postmortem CT scan, etc.), which shows signs of COVID-19 infection (reported by qualified personnel) can be used depending on the local and current situations; and
   e. Death of a positive case within 30 days from a positive result.

5. Classification of “Death with COVID-19”

COVID-19 related death that does NOT meet the criteria in paragraph 4 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:


WORKFLOW COVID-19 MORTALITY REPORTING

COVID-19 Related Death

Death DUE TO COVID-19

Inpatient Death (Meets the criteria for the classification of Death Due to COVID-19)

Death WITH COVID-19

Brought-in-Dead (BID) (Meets the criteria for the classification of Death Due to COVID-19)

Case of death confirmed positive for COVID-19 but the cause of death was not due to COVID-19 infection.

Report to the in-charge officer (PIC) or Liaison Officer (LO) for the death of COVID-19 in the hospital or institution and Public Health Unit (UKA) of the hospital/institution

"Submitted" the case via CPRC Hospital Management (i.e., the Clinical Audit Unit) through COVID-19 Mortality Module in the CPRC Hospital System

Hospital/institution PIC report to PIC for COVID-19 related death at State Health Department (SHD) (State CPRC/ Bilk Gerakan)

UKA hospital/institution informs District Health Office (DHO - Health Inspector) for notification and initiate field investigation

DHO investigates (if applicable) and registers the case to SHD

Notify the case to the National CPRC for verification and registration of case

"Pending" cases will be sent back to hospital

The Clinical Audit Unit reviews the case summary

The Clinical Audit Unit verifies the death to be announced and included in the daily National COVID-19 Mortality Statistic
MANAGEMENT OF COVID-19 RELATED DEATH AT THE PRIVATE HEALTHCARE FACILITY

CONFRMED 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

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

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

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

Undetermined

Make a Police Report (Ref. Annex 20)

Post Mortem

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

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

Mortuary

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