





# HMPV Virus and China: Debunking Myths and Misinformation

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## Dear Editor,

The recent surge in human metapneumovirus (HMPV) cases in China has triggered global concern, raising critical questions about its public health implications and the geopolitical narratives shaping discussions around its origin and spread. As the world navigates this outbreak, two pivotal questions arise: Is China responsible for the spread of HMPV? And why is China being blamed? These inquiries warrant a measured, evidence-based analysis, free from the politicization that has too often distorted global health discussions.

HMPV is an acute respiratory virus known to cause symptoms similar to those of the common cold or flu. It is neither a new pathogen nor a uniquely Chinese phenomenon. Despite the absence of a vaccine, HMPV has circulated in human populations for decades, with periodic outbreaks occurring across different regions (Gandhi et al., 2022). Recent reports indicate a localized rise in cases within China, but it is important to contextualize these trends. It was clarified that these cases align with seasonal patterns typical of respiratory infections in the northern hemisphere during winter (Kuang et al., 2024).

Despite these facts, unfounded allegations have emerged, accusing China of engineering HMPV as a bioweapon—an accusation eerily reminiscent of the misinformation campaigns during the COVID-19 pandemic. These claims lack scientific merit and fail the test of logical scrutiny. Historically, pandemics and outbreaks have been met with blame and scapegoating rather than a commitment to collective responsibility. However, past experiences—most notably during COVID-19—underscore the dangers of politicizing health crises. Misinformation erodes trust in science and public health institutions, delaying effective responses and exacerbating human suffering.

China has played an instrumental role in combating global health crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic. The country contributed significantly to vaccine distribution, providing essential medical supplies and vaccines to nations such as Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka (Obaidullah & Raihan, 2024). Furthermore, China's humanitarian aid efforts extend beyond disease response. It has provided critical support to vulnerable populations, such as the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, delivering food, healthcare services, and hygiene kits (Obaidullah et al., 2024). These



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actions align with China's broader foreign policy and inject soft power, which emphasizes stability, economic cooperation, and global partnerships over conflict and disruption (Hossain & Obaidullah, 2025; Obaidullah & Hossain, 2024). The notion that China would deliberately create or spread a virus that threatens its own population and economic stability defies both logic and historical precedent.

Rather than engaging in counterproductive blame games, the international community must focus on mitigating the spread of HMPV through rigorous scientific research, transparent communication, and multilateral cooperation. Lessons from COVID-19 have demonstrated that divisive rhetoric undermines trust and hampers coordinated responses. The real enemy is not any particular nation but the persistent threat of emerging infectious diseases. Addressing such challenges requires a commitment to global health security, predicated on mutual trust, transparent data sharing, and adherence to international health protocols.

It is imperative that policymakers, media outlets, and global health organizations approach this situation with responsibility and integrity. Public health must be prioritized over political narratives. The spread of misinformation not only misdirects public concern but also weakens the global response to real and immediate threats. Instead of using HMPV as a tool for geopolitical leverage, the focus must remain on scientific collaboration and evidence-driven policymaking.

The world must learn from past mistakes. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the costs of allowing misinformation and political agendas to dictate health responses. Moving forward, it is crucial that we resist the temptation to politicize infectious disease outbreaks and instead foster an environment where science and cooperation guide our actions. Only through depoliticized, science-based efforts can we effectively address the challenges posed by HMPV and similar emerging threats.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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## ETHICS STATEMENT

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