



UNIwersytet Medyczny
IM. PIASTÓW ŚLĄSKICH WE WROCŁAWIU

Subject: Faculty Lectures of Virology
Topic: Coronaviruses causing COVID-19
and flu viruses

Academic Year 2024/2025

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Faculty: Medicine
Field of study: Medicine
Level of study (unif. MA)
Form of study (full time)
Year of study: III

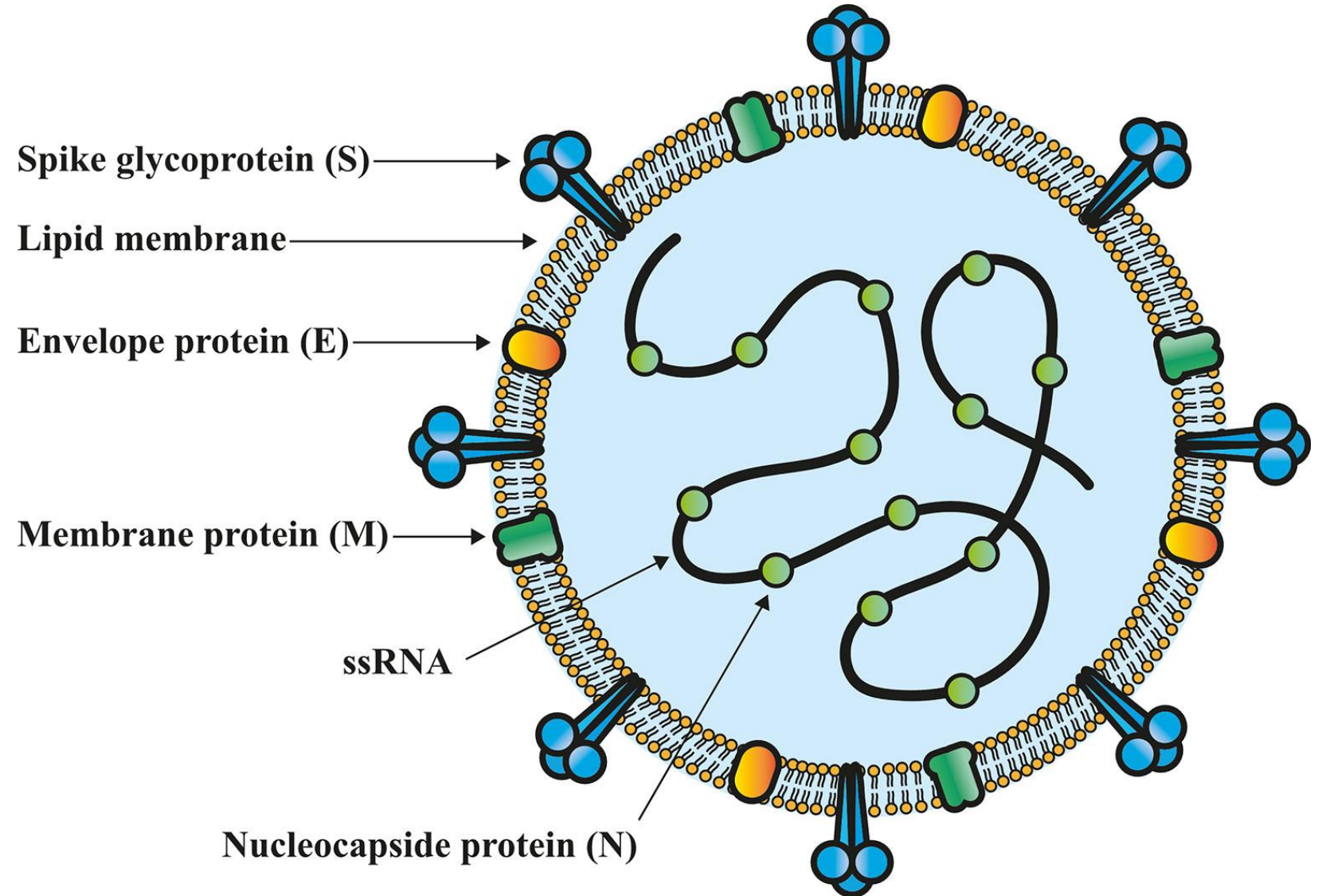
Academic title/professional title: prof. dr hab.
Name, last name of the lecturer: Beata Sobieszcańska
Position of person conducting classes: professor
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Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2

(+) ssRNA enveloped cytopathic virus

S protein:

- receptor recognition
- viral attachment
- viral entry into host cell



Nidovirales, Coronavirine family

Coronaviruses pathogenic to humans

Low pathogenic

HKU1, 229E,
NL63, OC43

Common cold
diarrhea

High pathogenic

SARS-CoV-1 2002
MERS-CoV 2012
SARS-CoV-2 2019

Modes of transmission

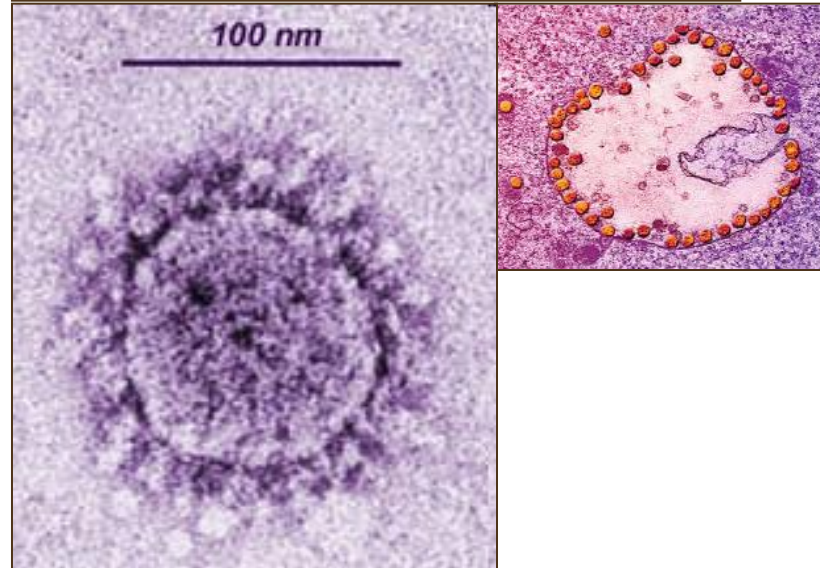
- droplet transmission, direct contact

Infectivity - the ability of a virus to jump from one person to another

- **SARS virus has low infectivity**
(it requires a large dose to pass on to the recipient)

Virulence - the property of the virus to cause damage to the host's organs

SARS virus has a high virulence



Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome

CLINICAL COURSE OF SARS

SARS SYMPTOMS TO LOOK OUT FOR



**Sudden onset
of high fever**



**Dry
cough**



**Chills and
shivering**



**Muscle
aches**



**Breathing
difficulties**

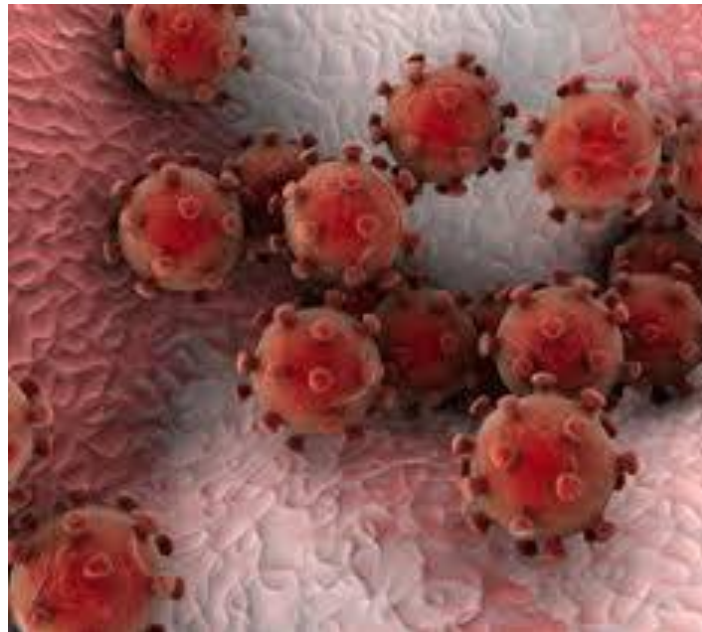
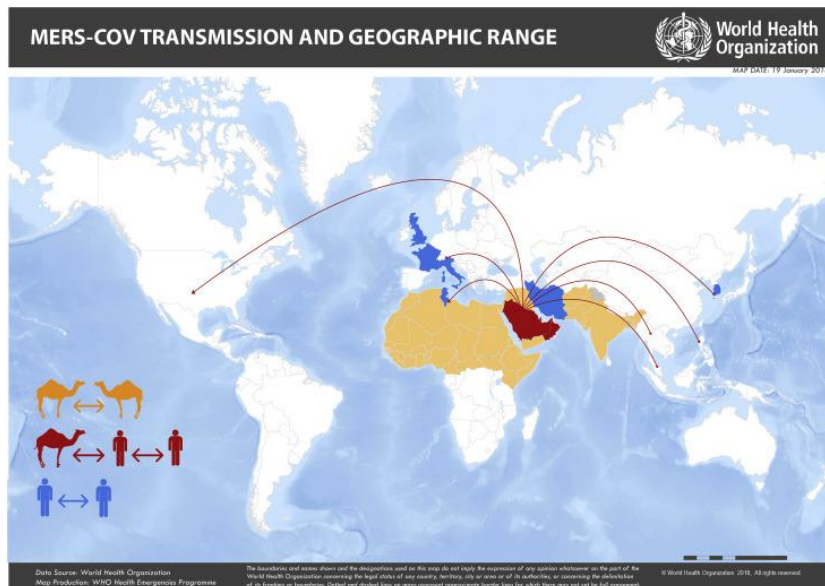
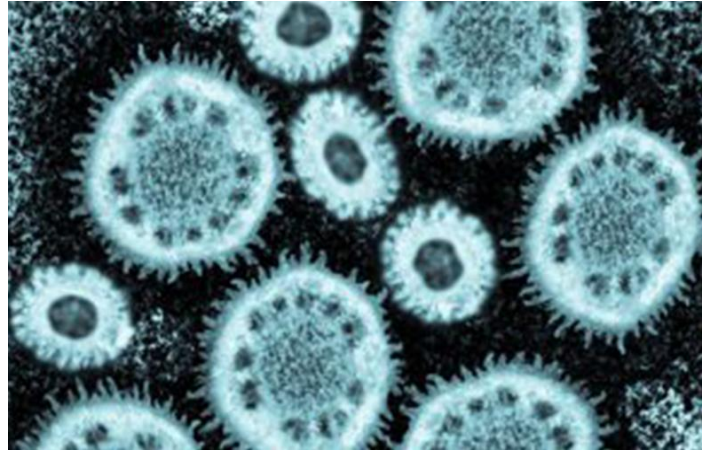
90%

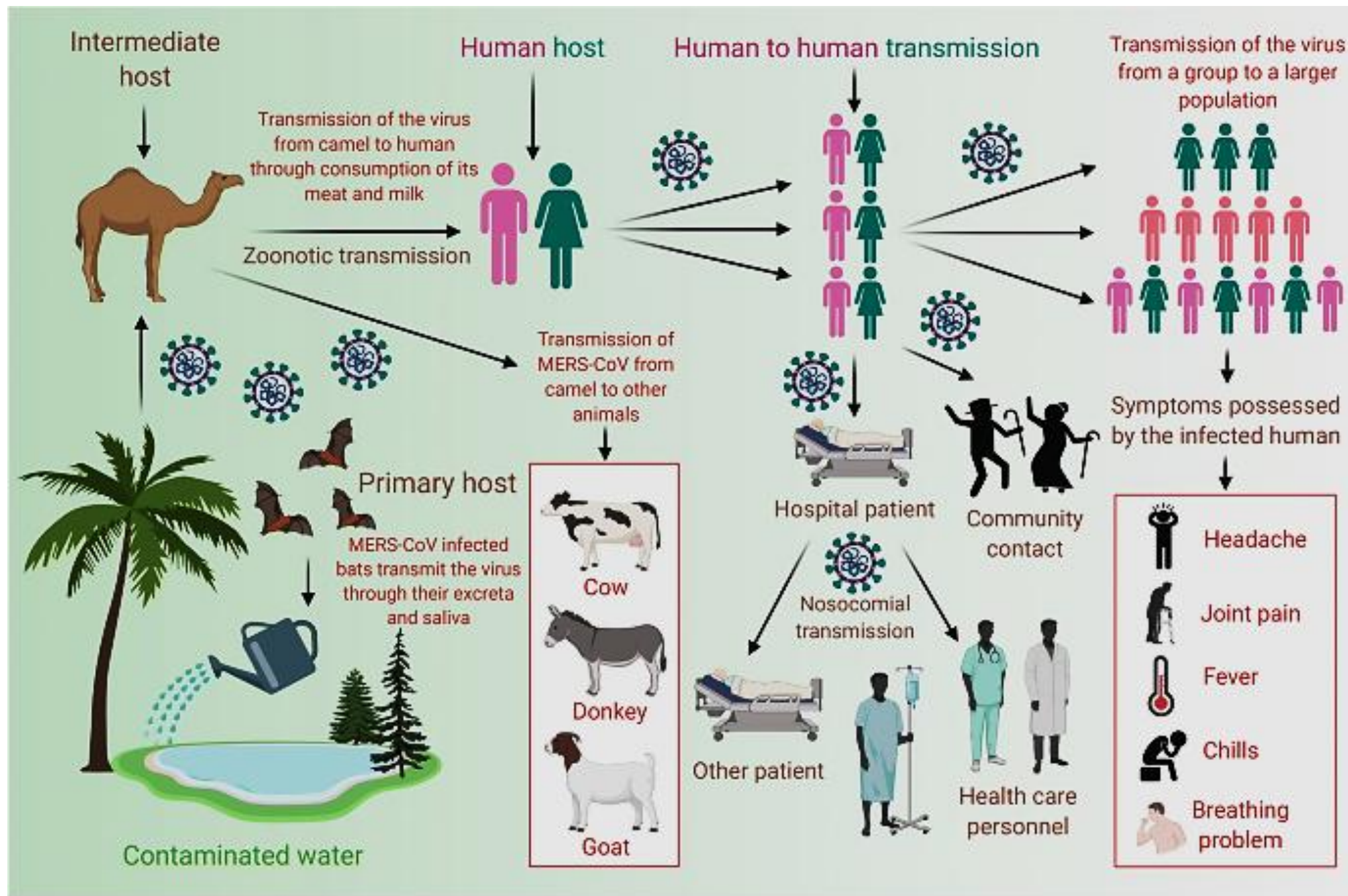
Death on 17-18 days

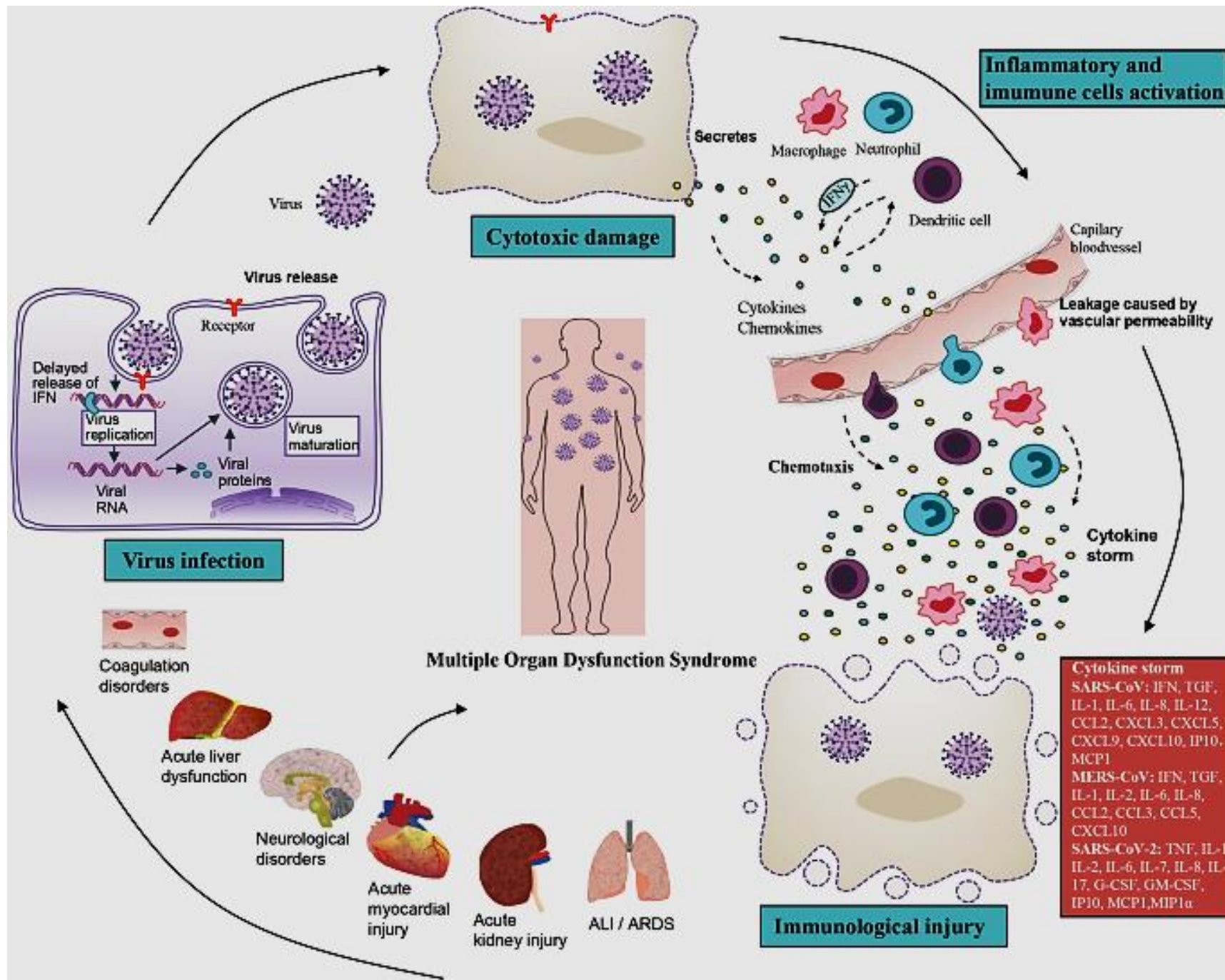
Middle East Respiratory Syndrome

Modes of transmission

- droplet transmission, direct contact
- MERS virus has low infectivity but high virulence







SARS/MERS case definitions

Clinical criteria:

- fever $>38^{\circ}\text{C}$ & respiratory illness
- radiologic findings (pneumonia, RDS)
- autopsy findings (pneumonia, RDS)

Epidemiologic criteria:

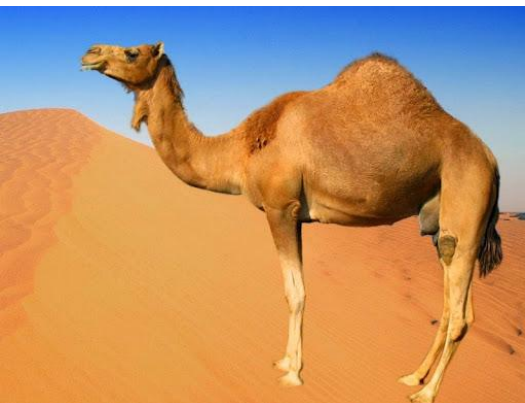
- travel history (10 days) to SARS/MERS-affected areas
- close contact with known or suspected patients

Laboratory criteria:

- antibodies specific to SARS-CoV/MERS-Cov
- RT-PCR

SARS endemic areas in Asia: China, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Vietnam

MERS endemic areas: Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Republic of Korea



SPECIES BARRIERS

Primary

Secondary/
Host
reciever

Out Break
Year

Place of
Origin



BAT

Palm Civets and
Racoon Dogs
between
Bats and Human

2002

Guangdong
Province
of CHINA



BAT

CAMEL

2012

Arrabian Peninsula
(Middle-East)

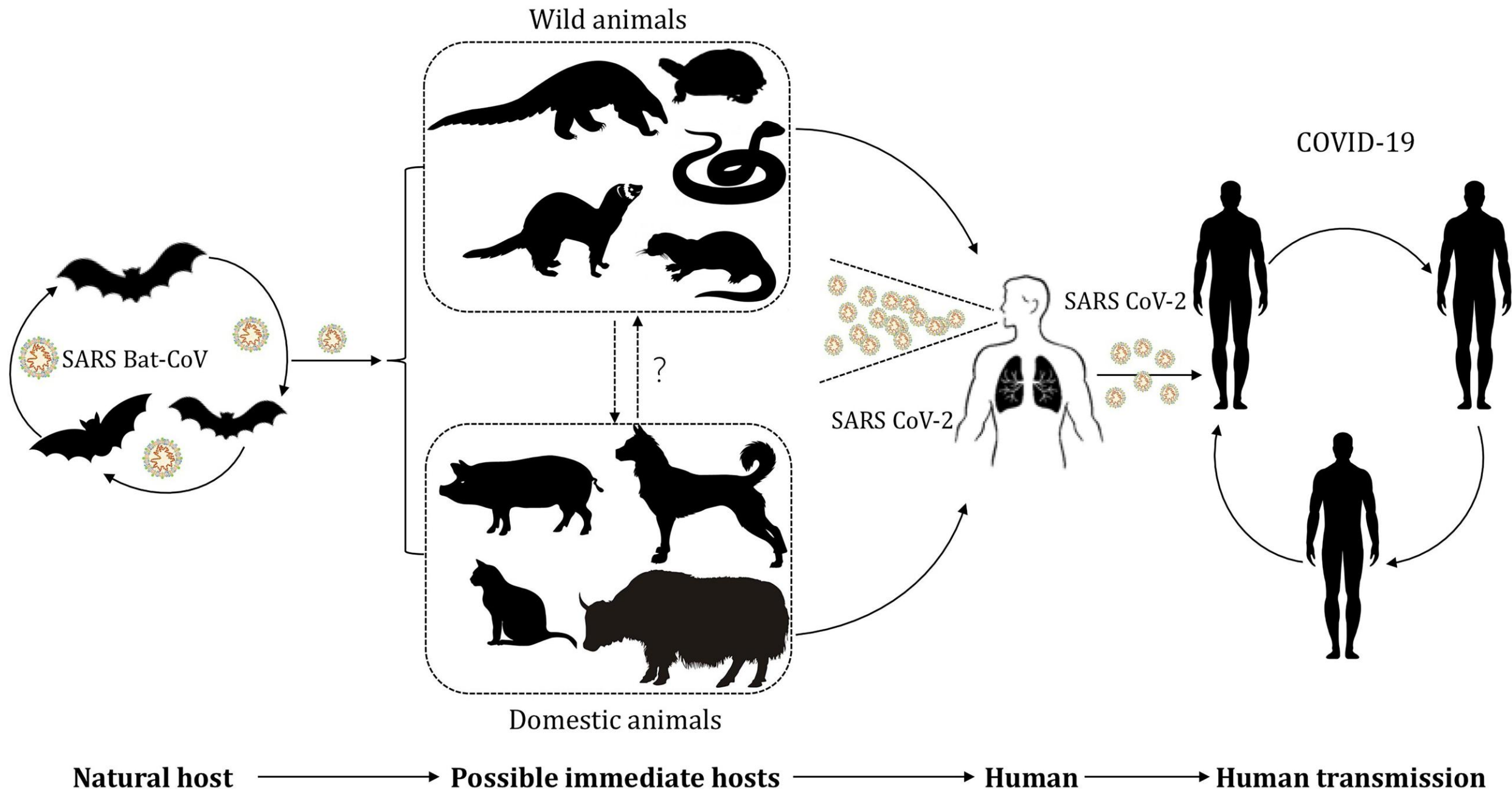


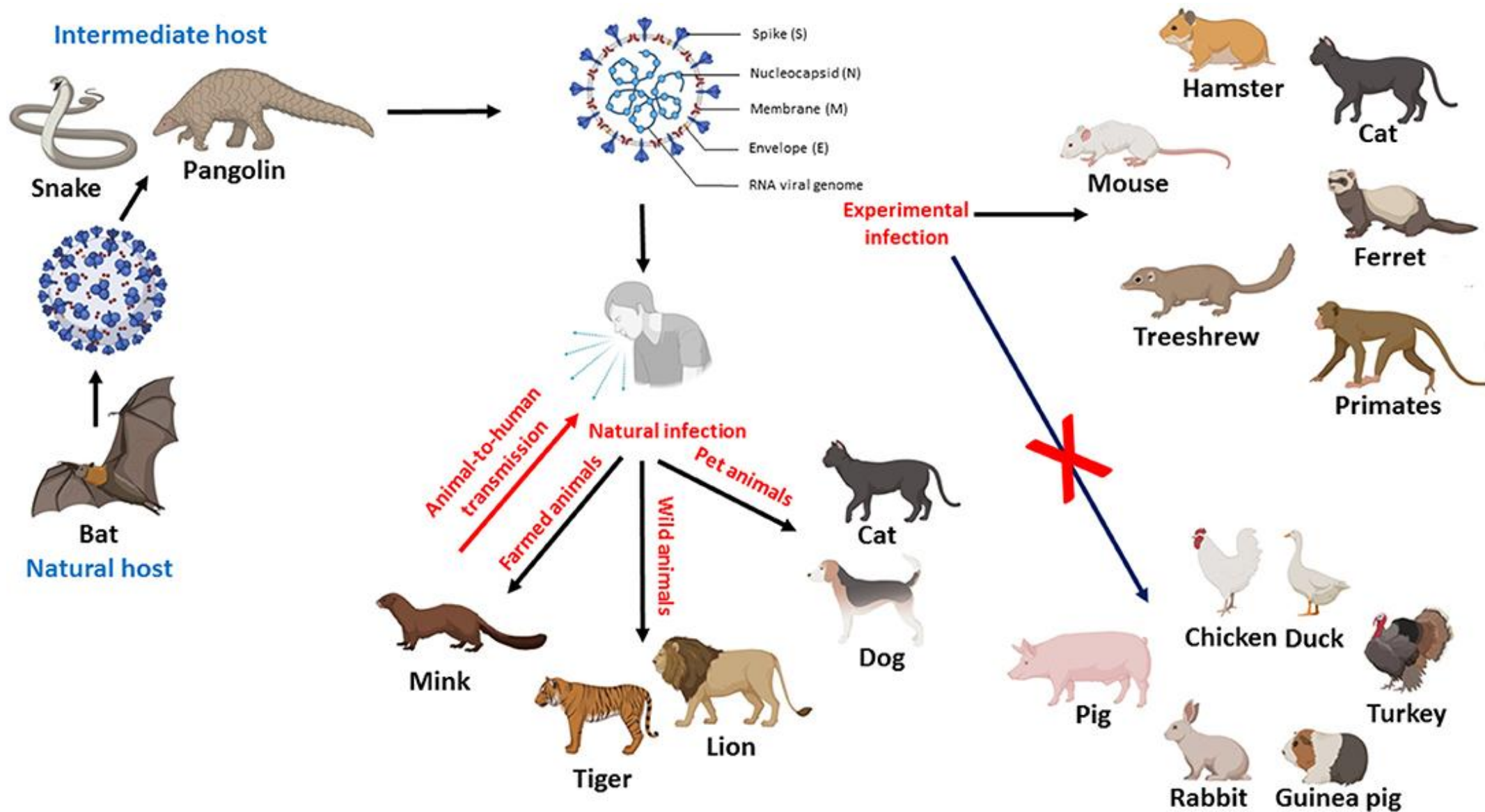
BAT

UNKNOWN

2019

Wuhan City,
CHINA





What are the differences between SARS-CoV-2 and SARS-CoV-1 and MERS-CoV?

Similarities with other SARS viruses:

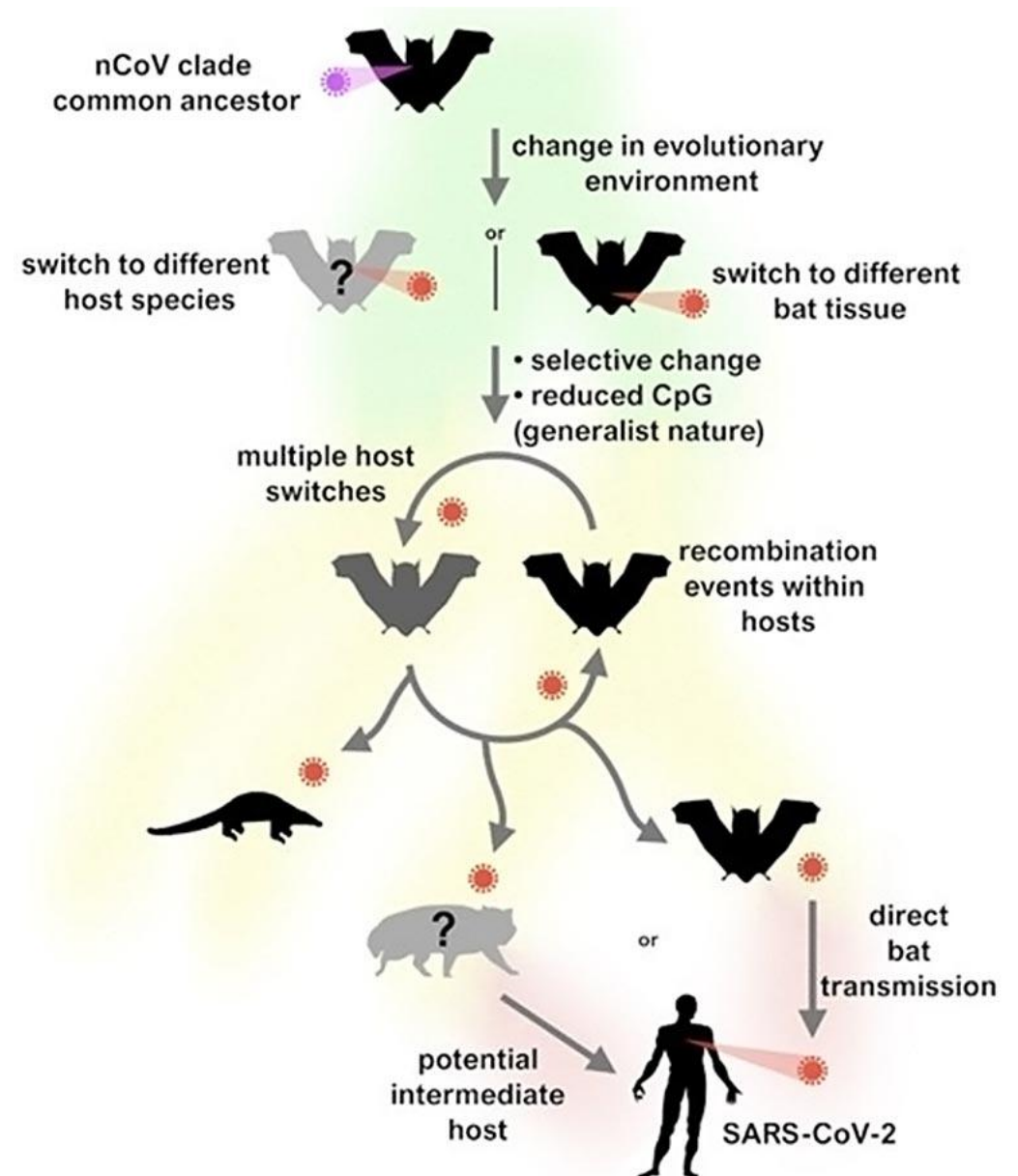
- the same structure
- all produce RTI
- spread by respiratory droplets
- have similar stability in the environment
- can lead potentially to serious illness
- **no seasonality**

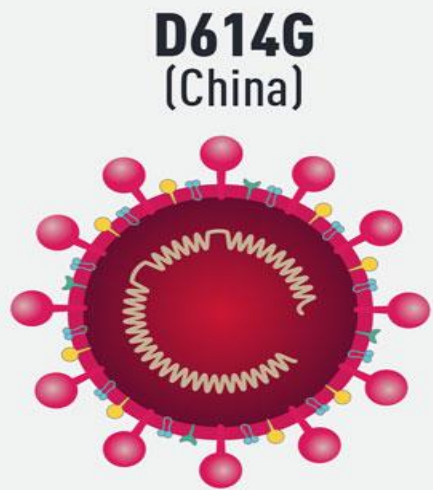
Differences:




- SARS-CoV-2 is easily transmitted within communities = **a lot more infectious and contagious than other Coronaviruses**
- infected people shed the virus earlier in the course of disease = difficulties in the detection of infected people
- some differences in the symptoms of COVID-19 and SARS
- Mortality rate of MERS - 34%; SARS - 10%; Cov-2 - 15% (decline)

Mutations in SARS-CoV-2 that make it adapted to humans

- **Transfer of the virus from animals (bats) to humans (zoonotic transmission)** - not so easy and long process often many intermediated animal hosts (e.g., civet cats) are necessary
- Why?
- **Lack of the virus-specific receptors in a new host** - so virus must adapt to a new organism (multiple abortive infections of a new hosts - but often one effective is enough)





Variant of Concern (country where first detected)	Total Characteristic Mutations	Mutations in the S gene receptor binding domain	Possible functional changes
B.1.1.7 (United Kingdom) 	18	N501Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More efficient transmission• Reduced antibody binding and immune protection• Reduced vaccine efficacy against B1.351 and P.1
B.1.351 (South Africa) 	8	N501Y, E484K, K417N	
P.1 (Brazil) 	21	N501Y, E484K	

New mutations: B.1.617.2 & B.1.1.529

General trend in mutations: **enhance virus infectivity and immune escape**



COVID-19

COVID-19 Signs and Symptoms

Circulatory

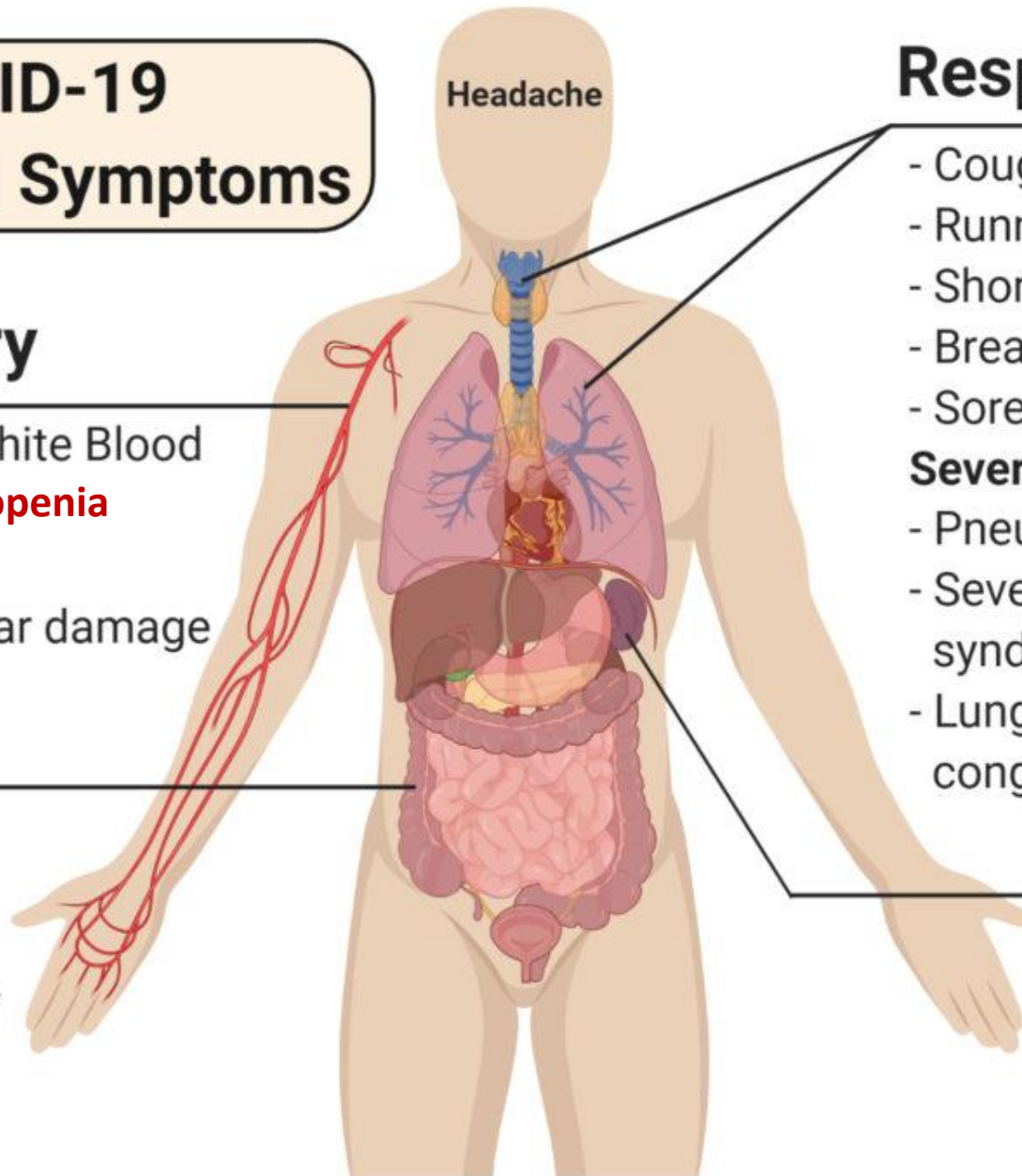
- Decreased White Blood Cells **lymphopenia**
- Severe Case**
- Cardiovascular damage

Digestive

- Diarrhea

Systemic

- Fever
- Fatigue



Respiratory

- Coughing and Sneezing **hemoptysis**
- Runny nose
- Shortness of breath
- Breathing difficulties **dyspnea**
- Sore throat

Severe Cases

- Pneumonia
- Severe acute respiratory syndrome **ARDS**
- Lungs inflammation and congestion

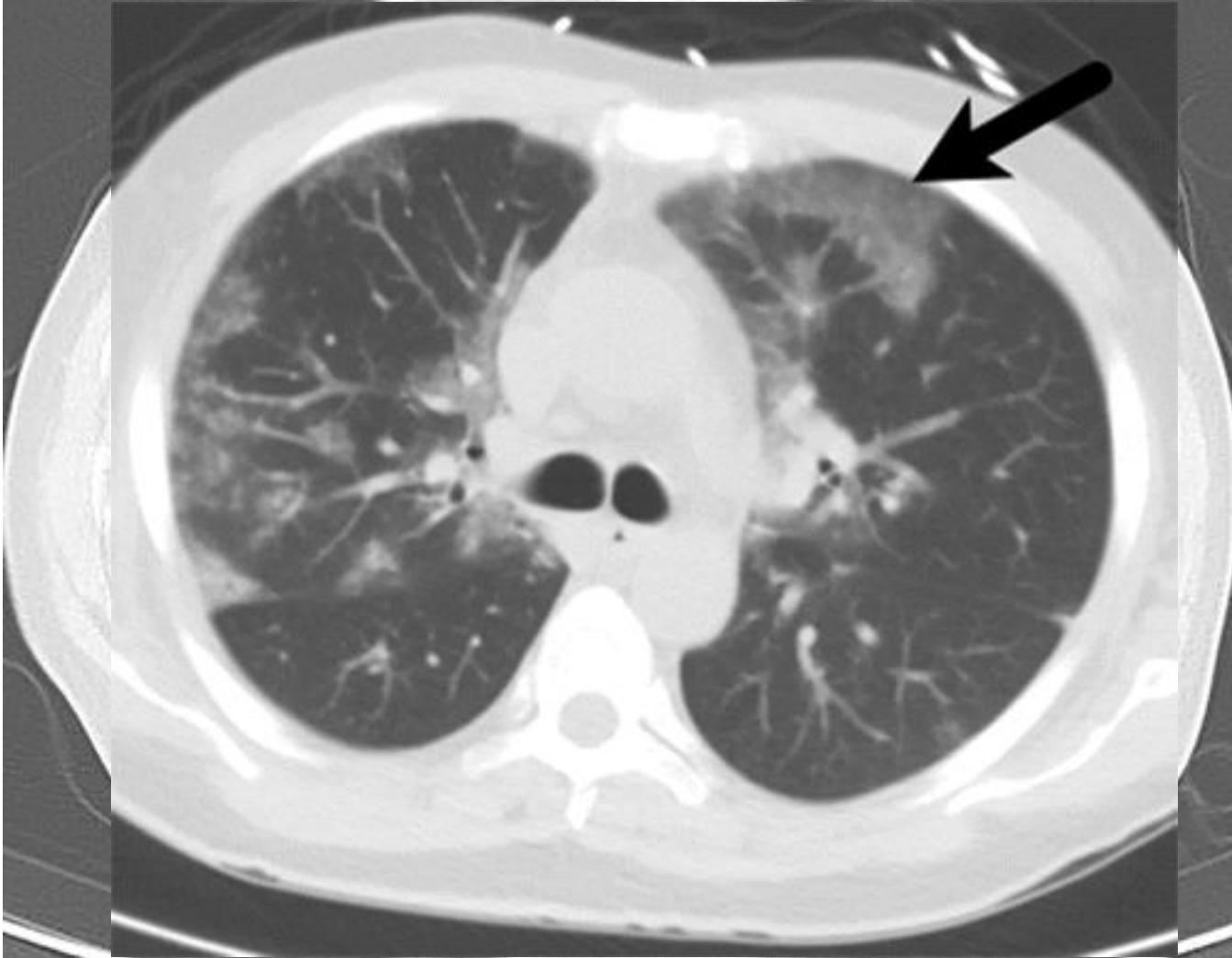
Excretory

- Decreased Kidney Functions
- Severe Case**
- Kidney Failure

Figure: Symptoms of COVID-19 caused by Novel Corona Virus, SARS-CoV-2, Image Copyright © Sagar Aryal

Grand-glass opacity (GGO) in subpleural regions (chest X-ray, CT scan)

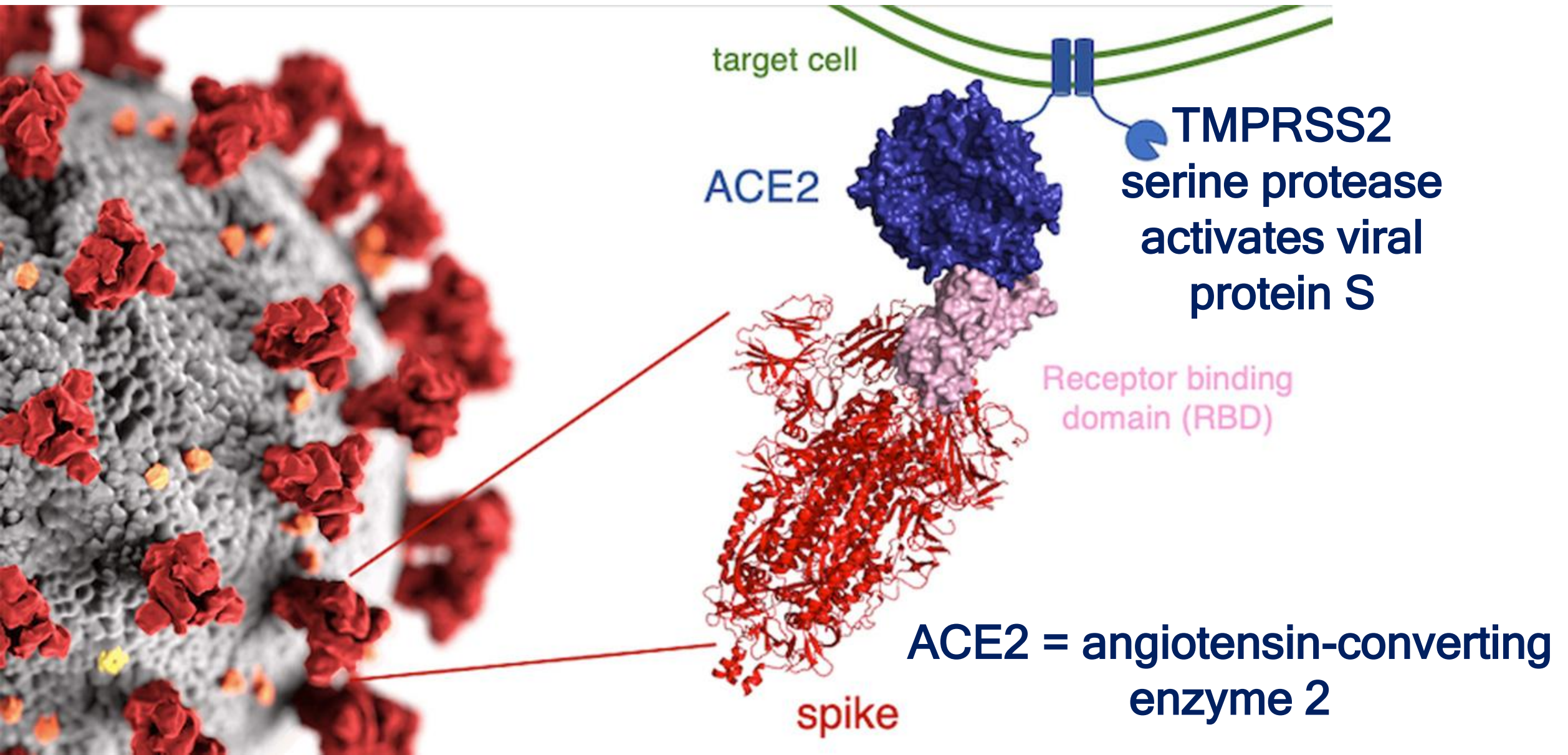
**GGO = hazy grey areas that indicate increased density inside the lungs
= air displacement by fluid, airway collapse, fibrosis, neoplastic process**



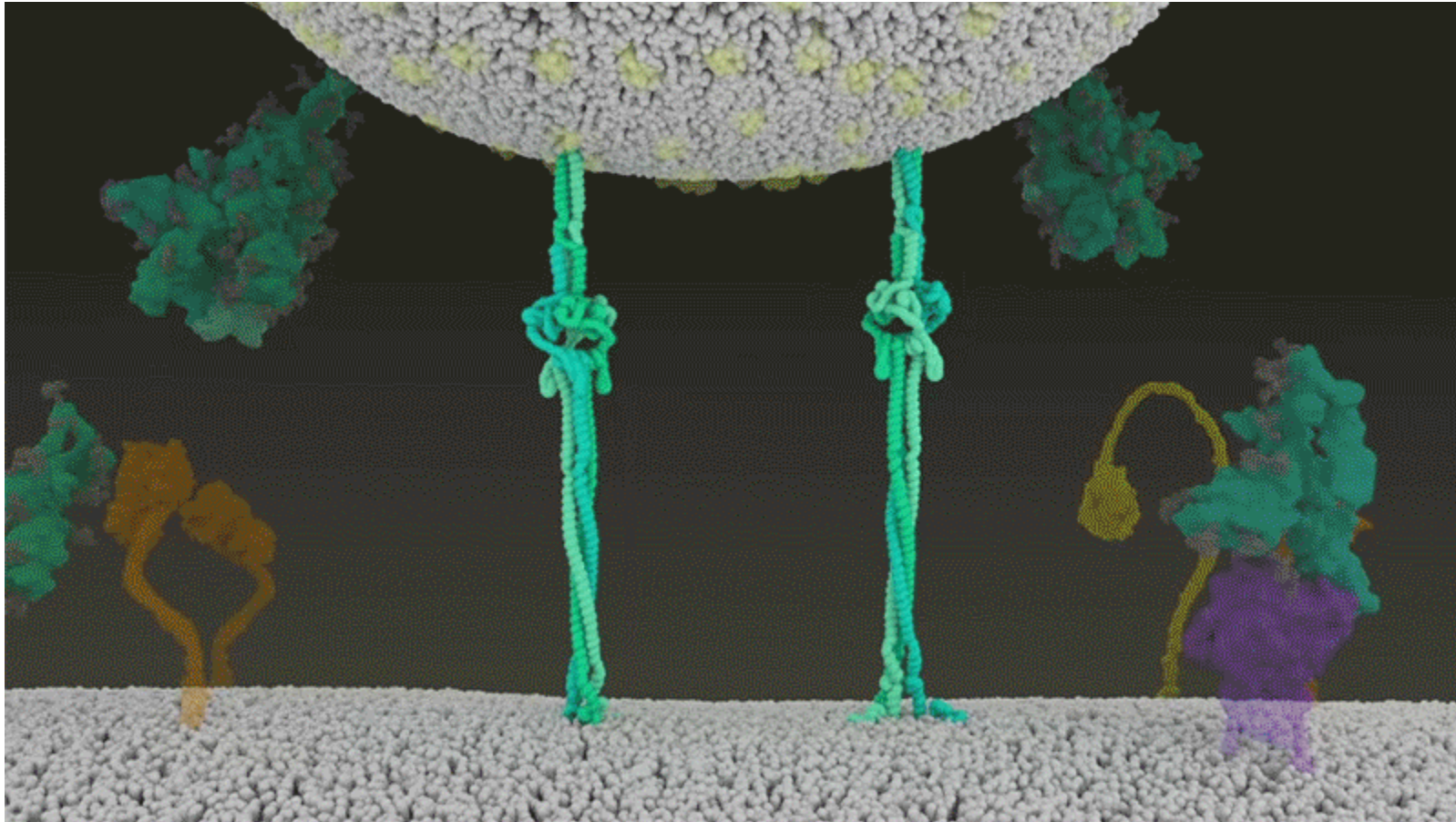
**URT symptoms,
diarrhea, acute
cardiac injury are
unique for Covid-19**

**Bilateral GGO,
fever, dry cough,
dyspnea are
shared with SARS**

SARS-CoV-2 binding to the host cell

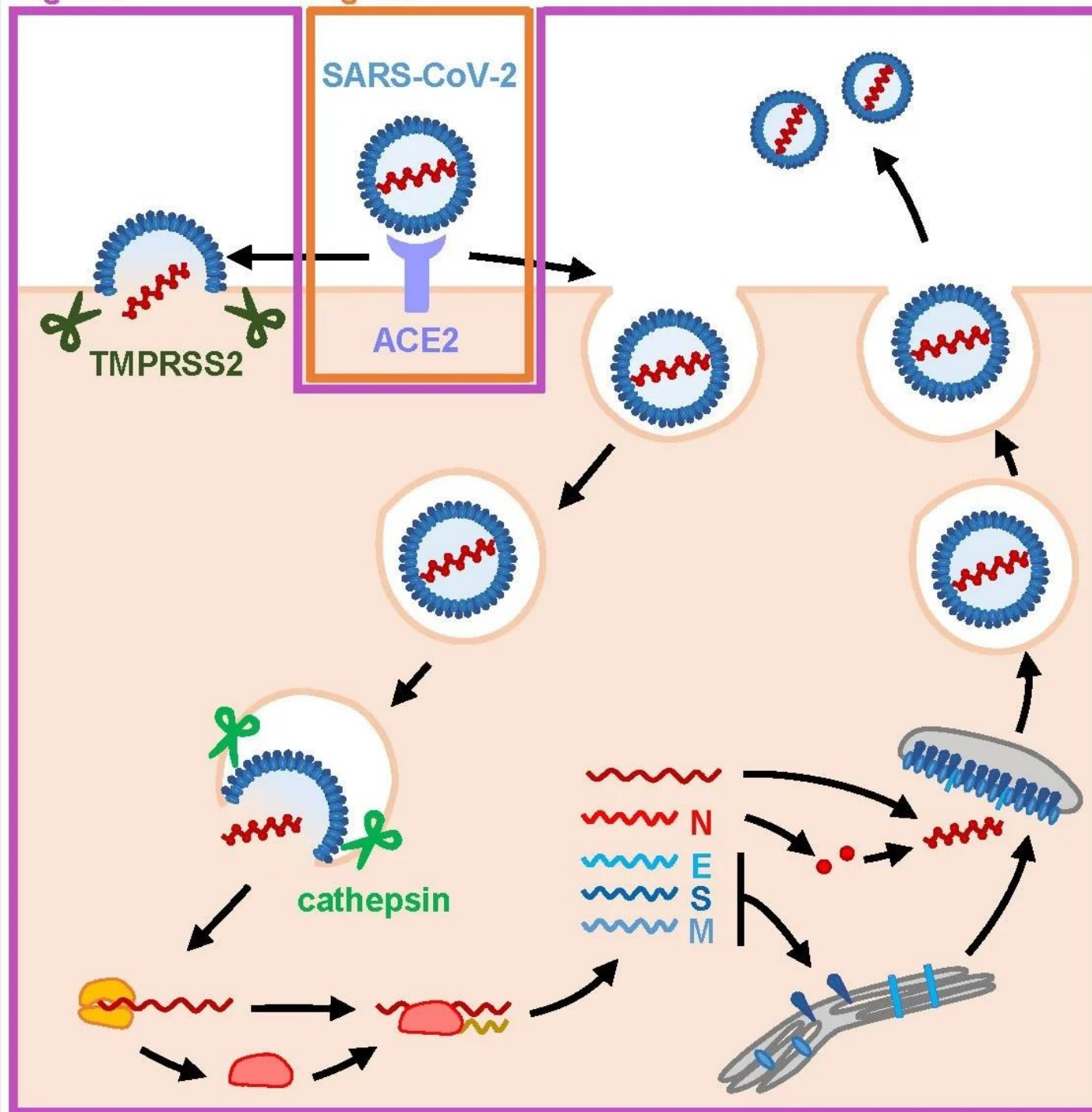


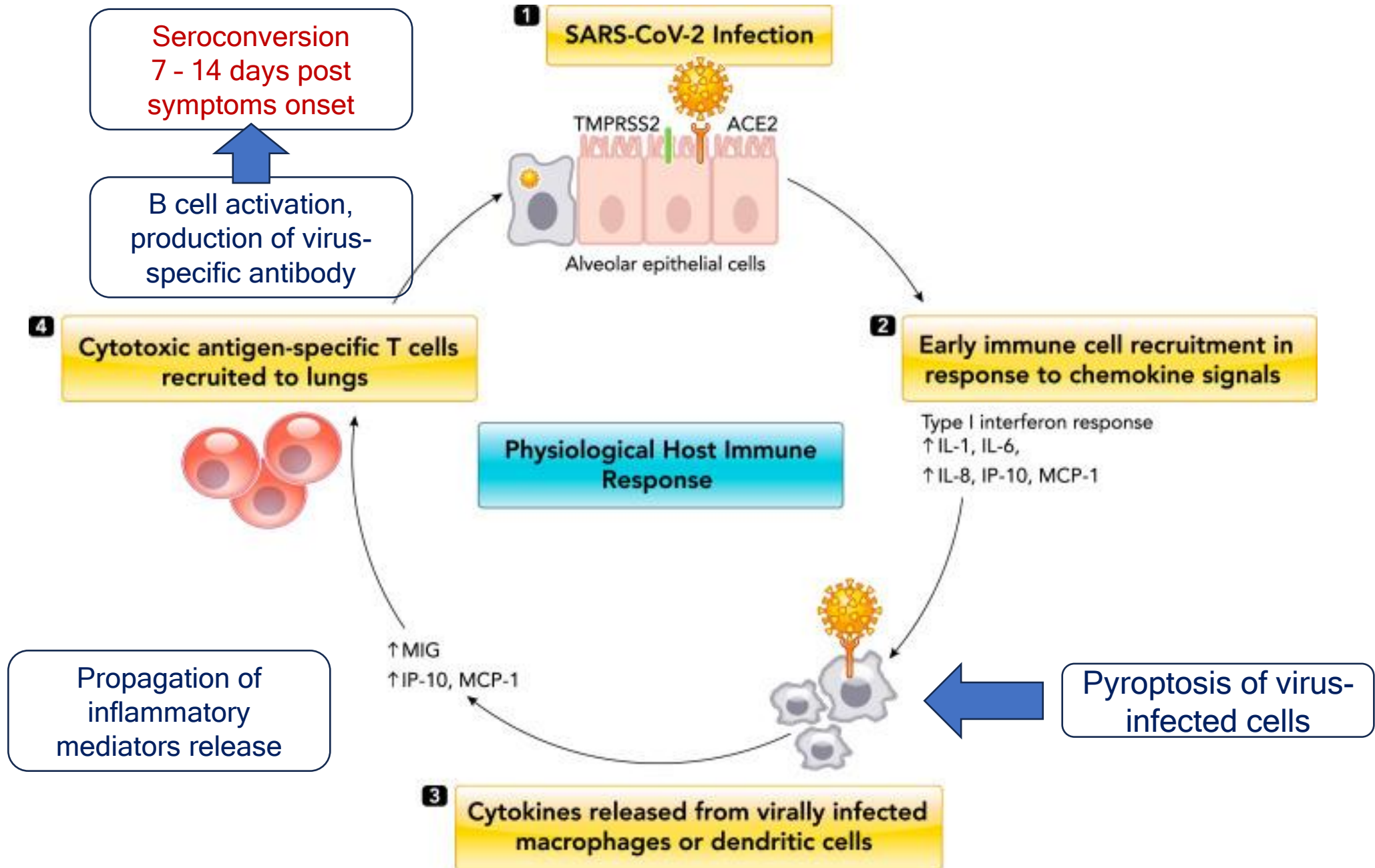
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xuc9D4LVJdg>

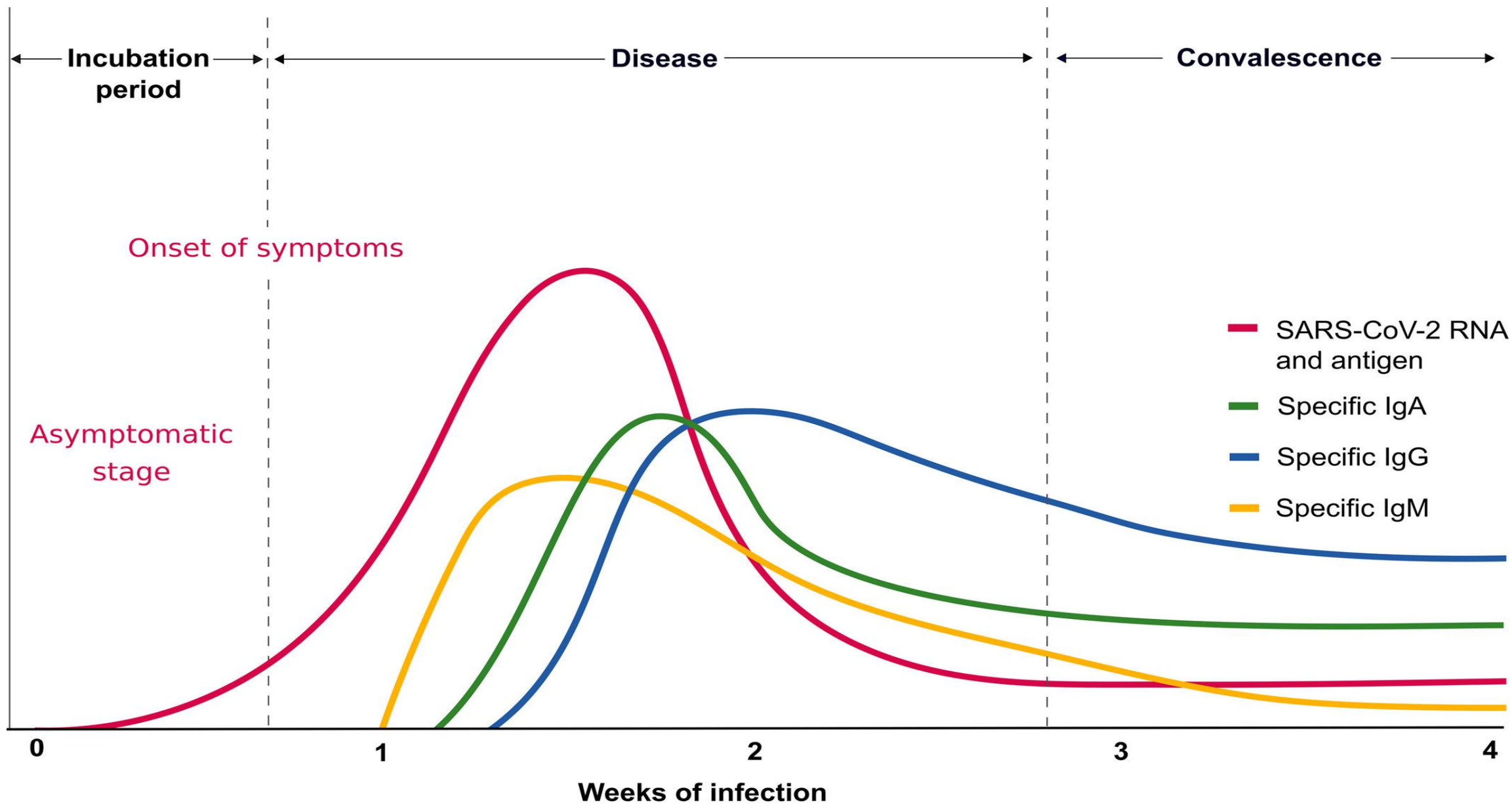


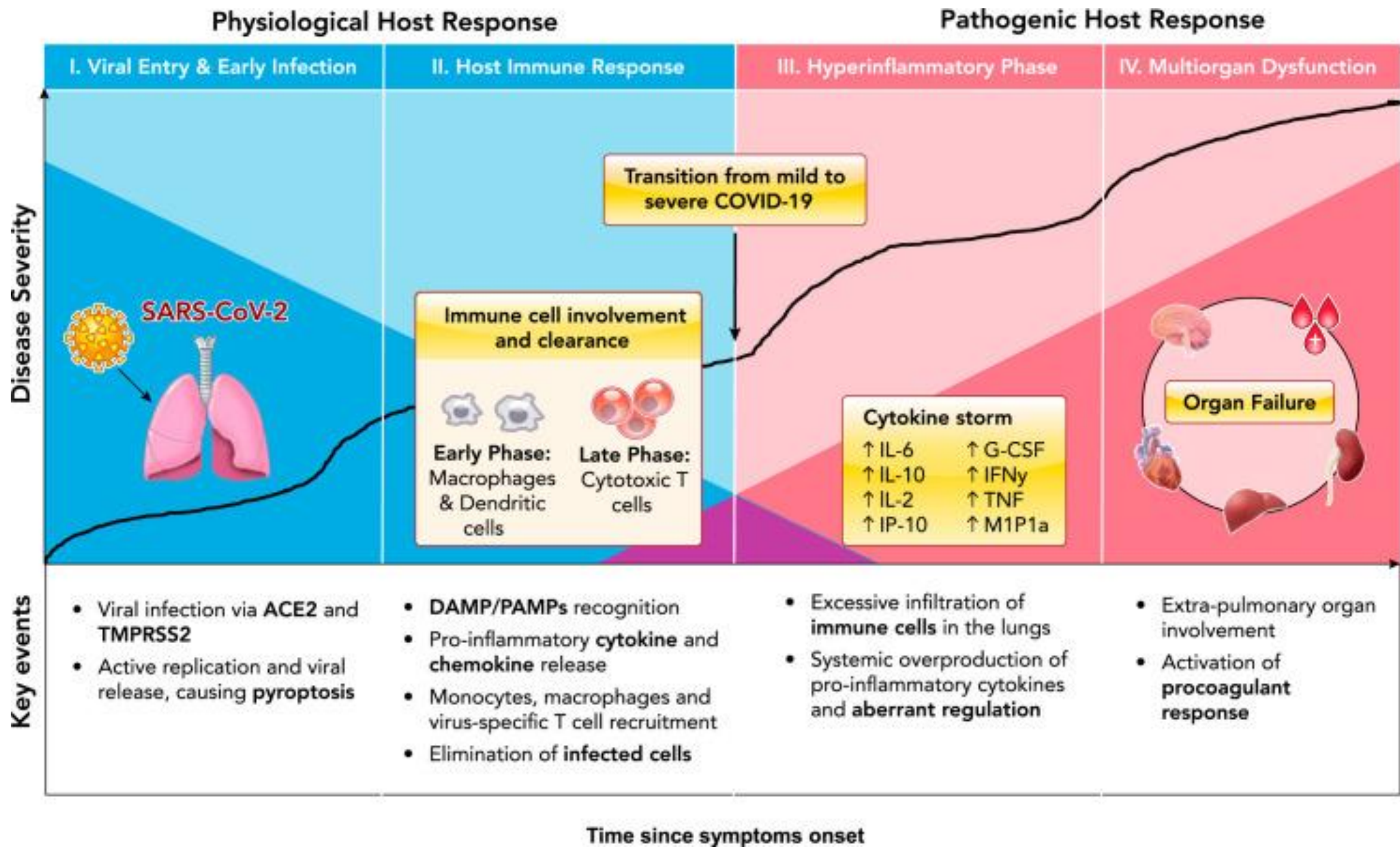
Pathomechanism of SARS-CoV-2 infection

- Spike S protein determines the diversity of coronaviruses and host tropism
- SARS-CoV-2 has higher affinity for the ACE2 receptor than SARS-CoV-1
- ACE2 expression is high throughout the body (in lung, heart, ileum, kidney and bladder, adipose tissue, thyroid, testis, heart, blood vessels, neurons, neuroglia etc.)
- Transmembrane serine protease 2 (TMPRSS2) cleavages S protein to S1 and S2 subunits - step necessary for fusion
- Furin-like cleavage site in S viral protein - furin-like proteases are ubiquitous in human body and may contribute to the widened cell tropism and enhanced transmission of SARS-CoV-2



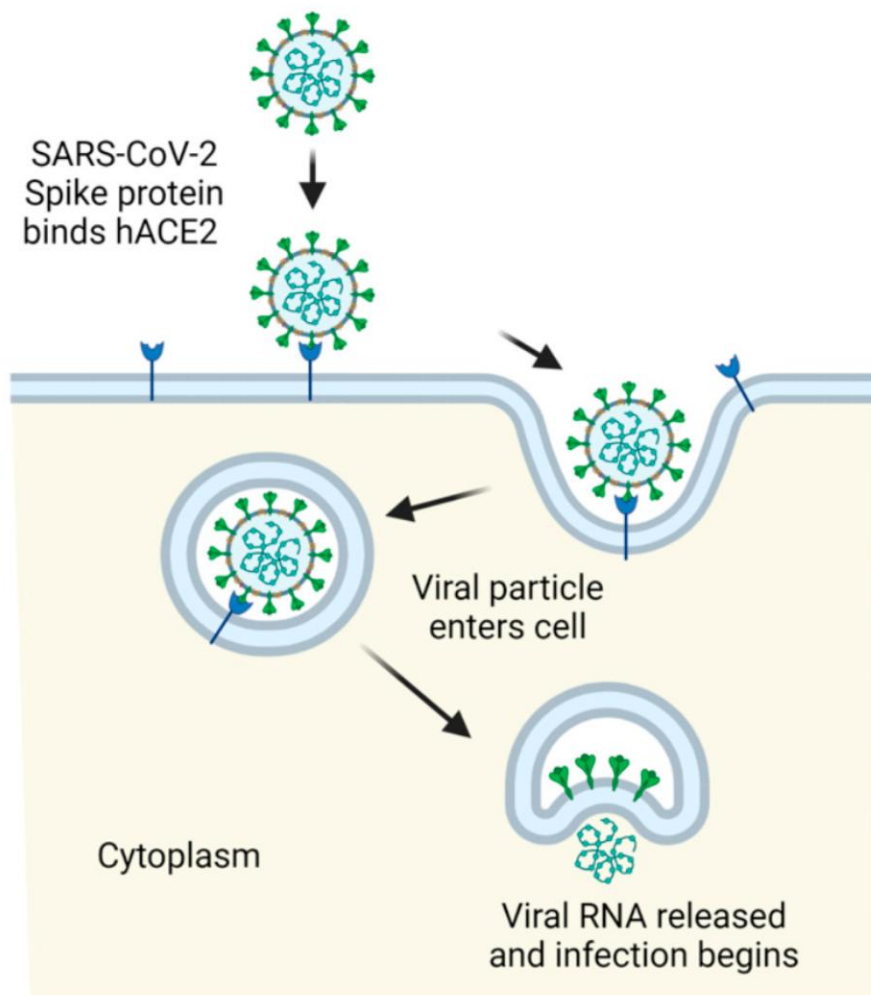






(a)

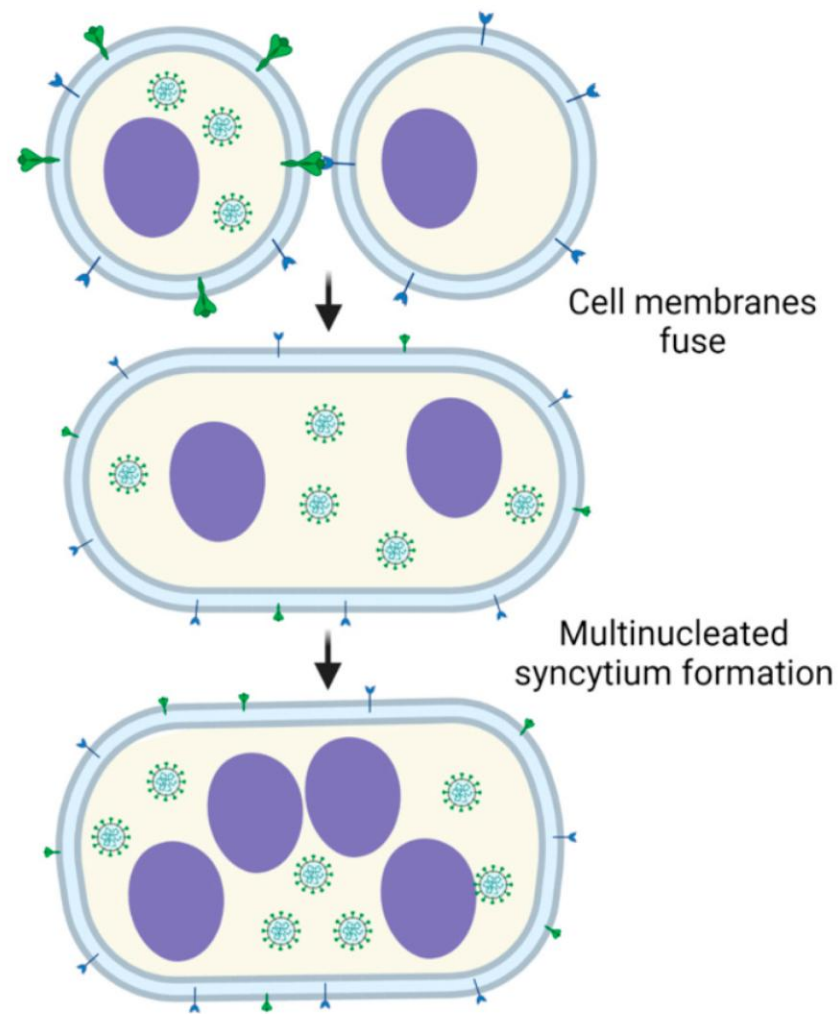
Classic hACE2 Mediated Infection

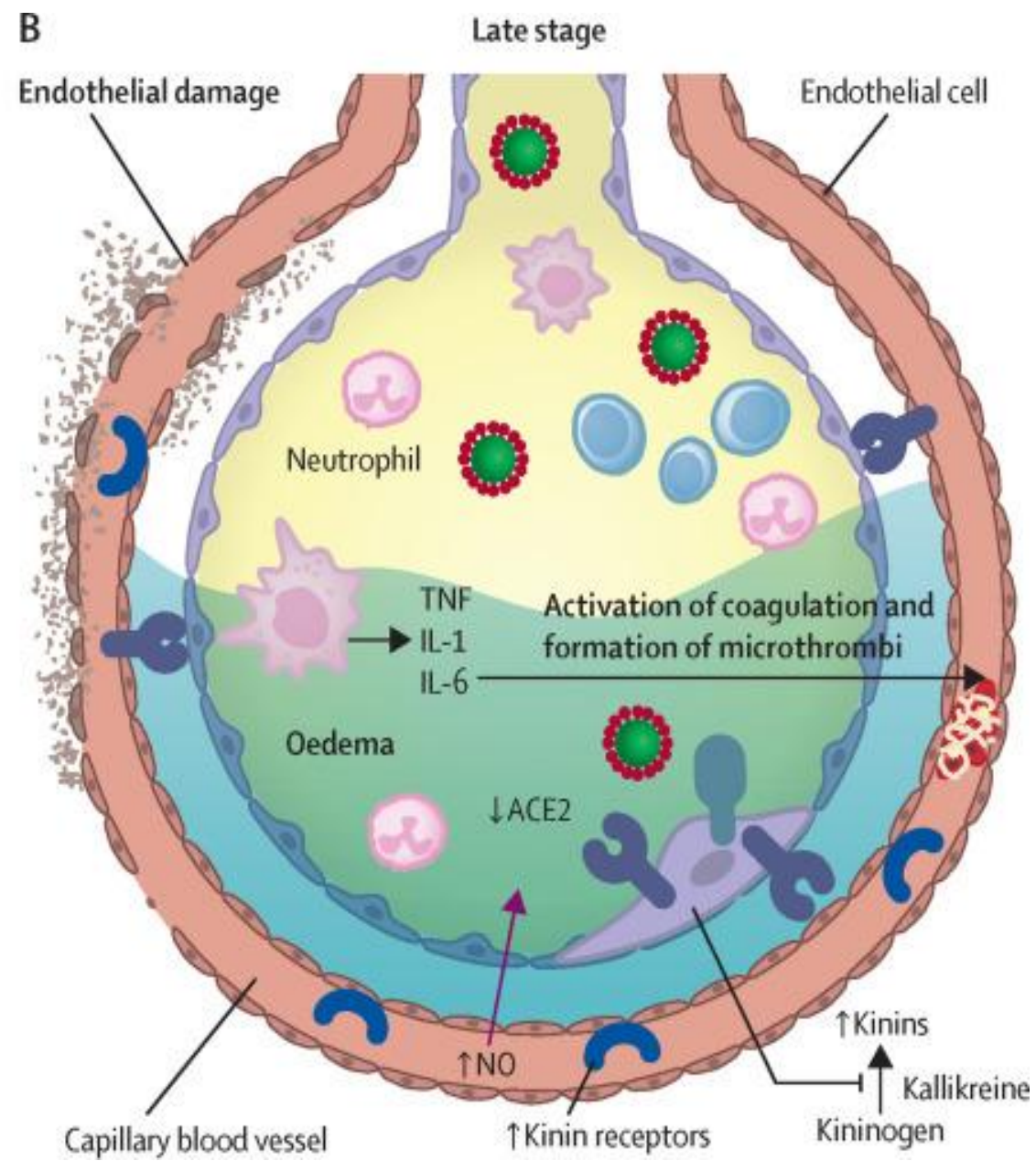
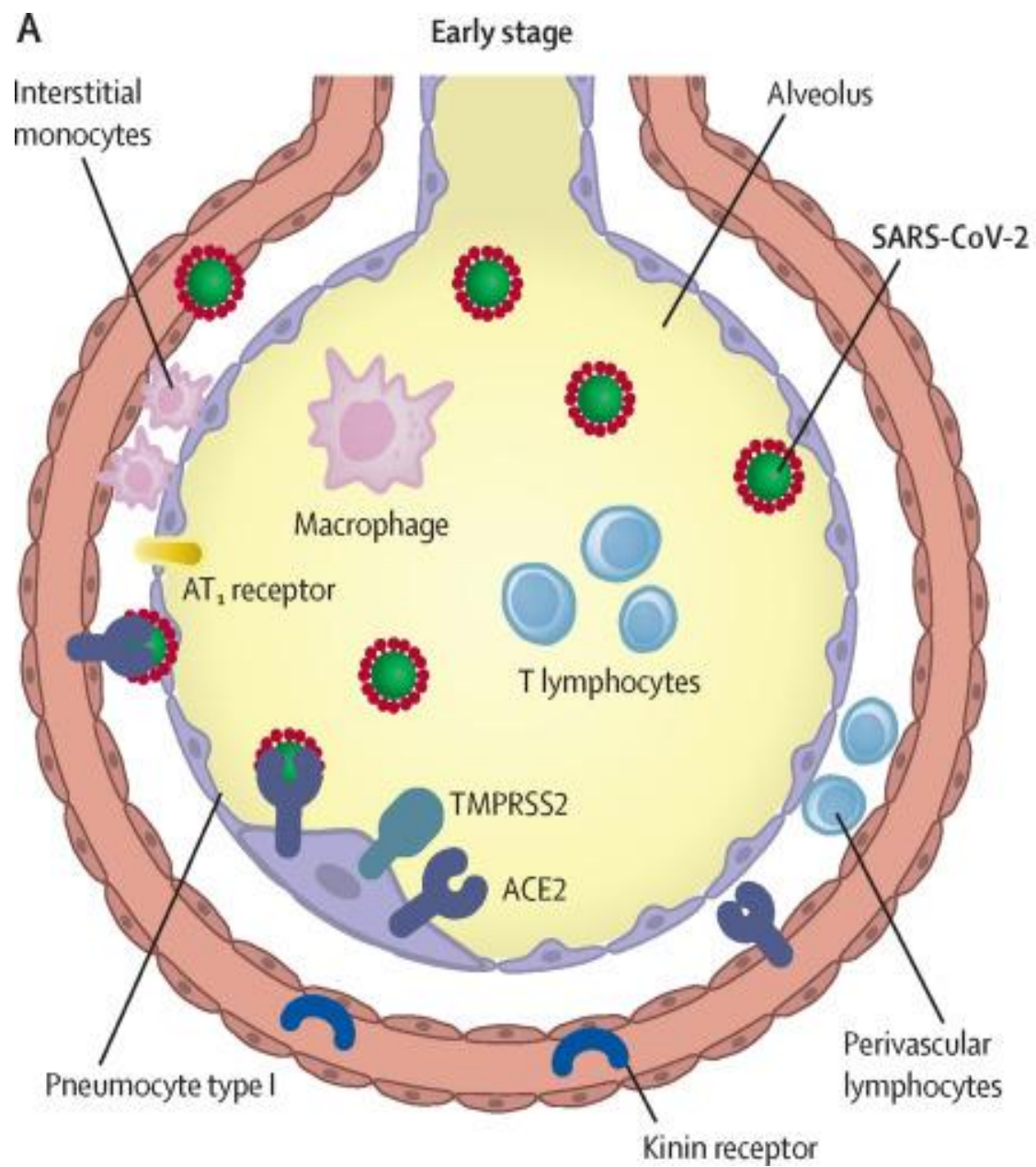


(b)

Cell-Cell Fusion

Infected cell expressing Spike binds
healthy cell expressing hACE2





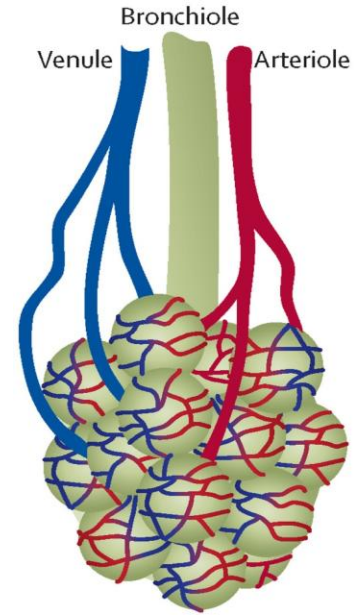
Hypoxia (PaO₂)



Pulmonary compliance ($\Delta V/\Delta P$)

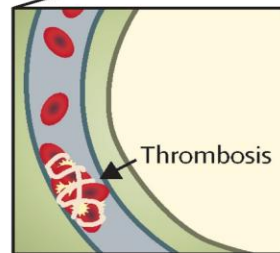
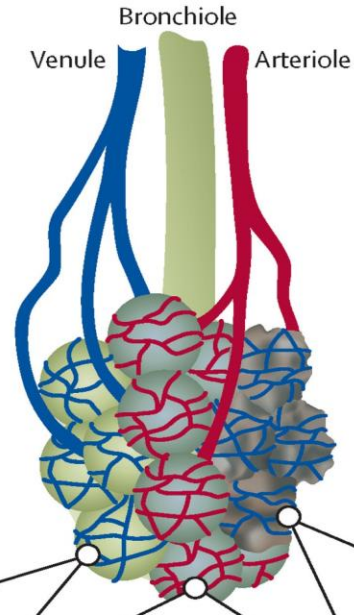
Compensation for hypoxia
High compliance

Loss of compensation for hypoxia
Low compliance



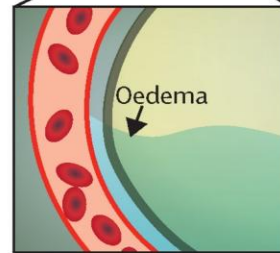
Impaired compensatory mechanisms

- Hypoxic vasoconstriction
- Increased ventilatory effort
- Cardiac output



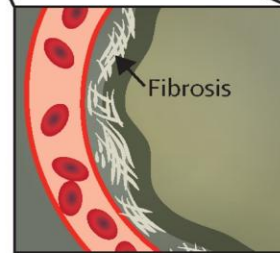
Increased dead space ventilation

- Thrombotic events
- Endothelial inflammation
- Pleural effusion



Increased diffusion barrier

- Alveolitis
- Pulmonary oedema

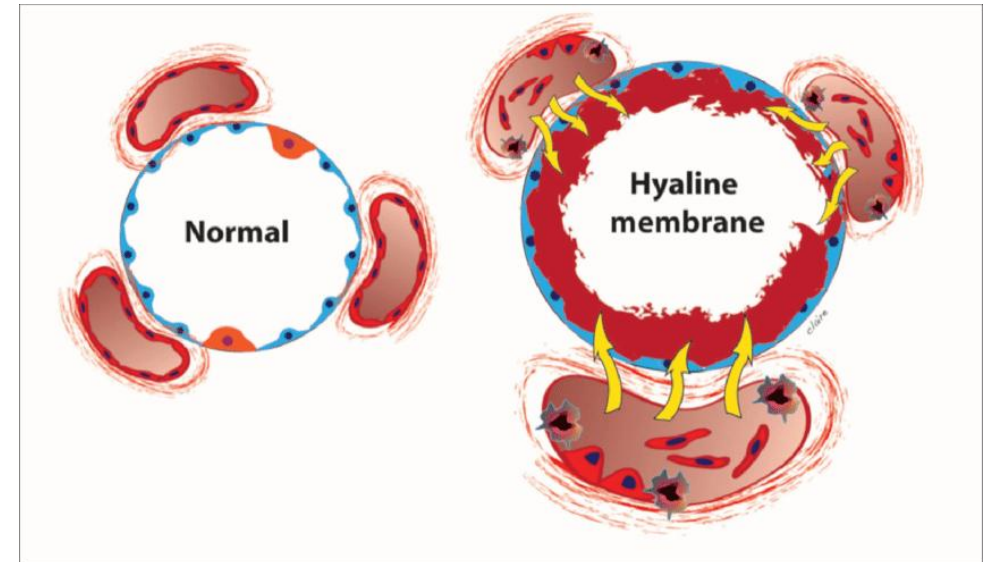


Increased right-to-left shunt

- Consolidation and/or fibrosis
- Atelectasis
- Angiogenesis

An unusual phenomenon of COVID-19 is **silent hypoxia** - critically low pressure of arterial oxygen, but only mild respiratory discomfort and dyspnea

Pulmonary compliance = a measure of the lung's ability to stretch and expand



Neurologic

Headaches
Dizziness
Encephalopathy
Guillain-Barré
Ageusia
Myalgia
Anosmia
Stroke



Renal

Acute kidney injury
Proteinuria
Hematuria



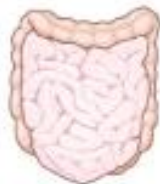
Hepatic

Elevated
aminotransferases
Elevated bilirubin



Gastrointestinal

Diarrhea
Nausea/vomiting
Abdominal pain
Anorexia



Thromboembolism

Deep vein thrombosis
Pulmonary embolism
Catheter-related thrombosis



Cardiac

Takotsubo cardiomyopathy
Myocardial injury/myocarditis
Cardiac arrhythmias
Cardiogenic shock
Myocardial ischemia
Acute cor pulmonale



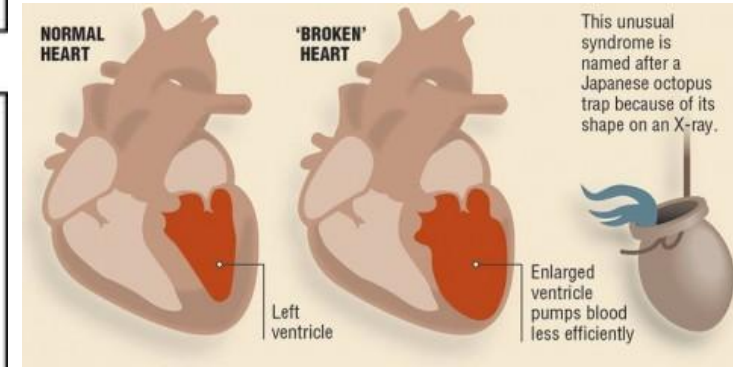
Endocrine

Hyperglycemia
Diabetic ketoacidosis

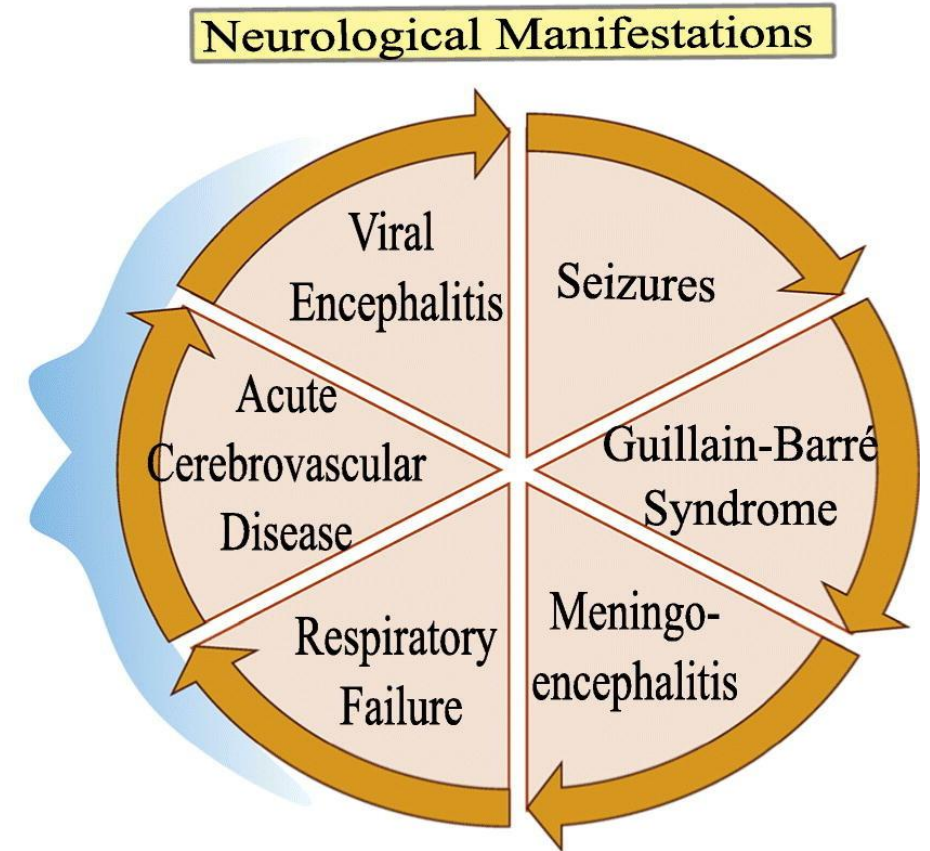
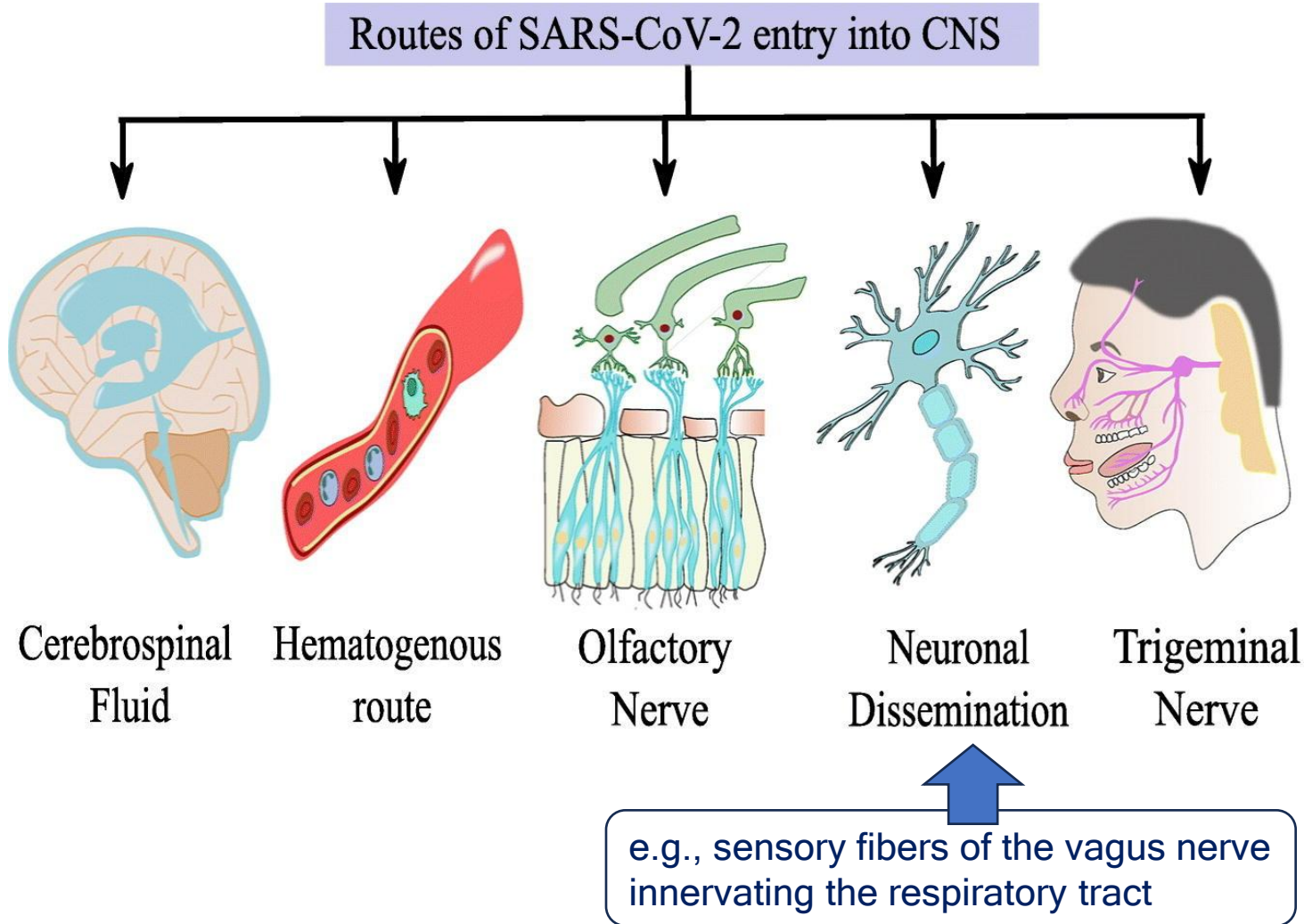


Dermatological

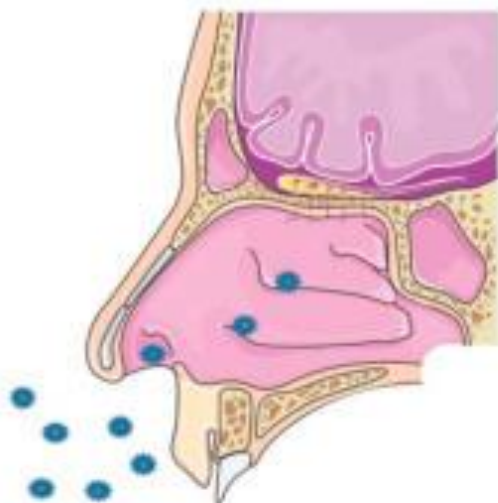
Petechiae
Livedo reticularis
Erythematous rash
Urticaria
Vesicles
Pernio-like lesions



NeuroCovid-19



SARS-CoV-2
Transsynaptic propagation



Neurological
Manifestation



Non-specific
Neurological Manifestation



Encephalopathy

Encephalitis

Headache

Cerebrovascular
diseases

Smell and taste
disorders



Fatigue

Unsteadiness

Myalgia

Guillain-Barré
Syndrome



Brain fog in COVID-19

memory loss

overwhelming by simple tasks

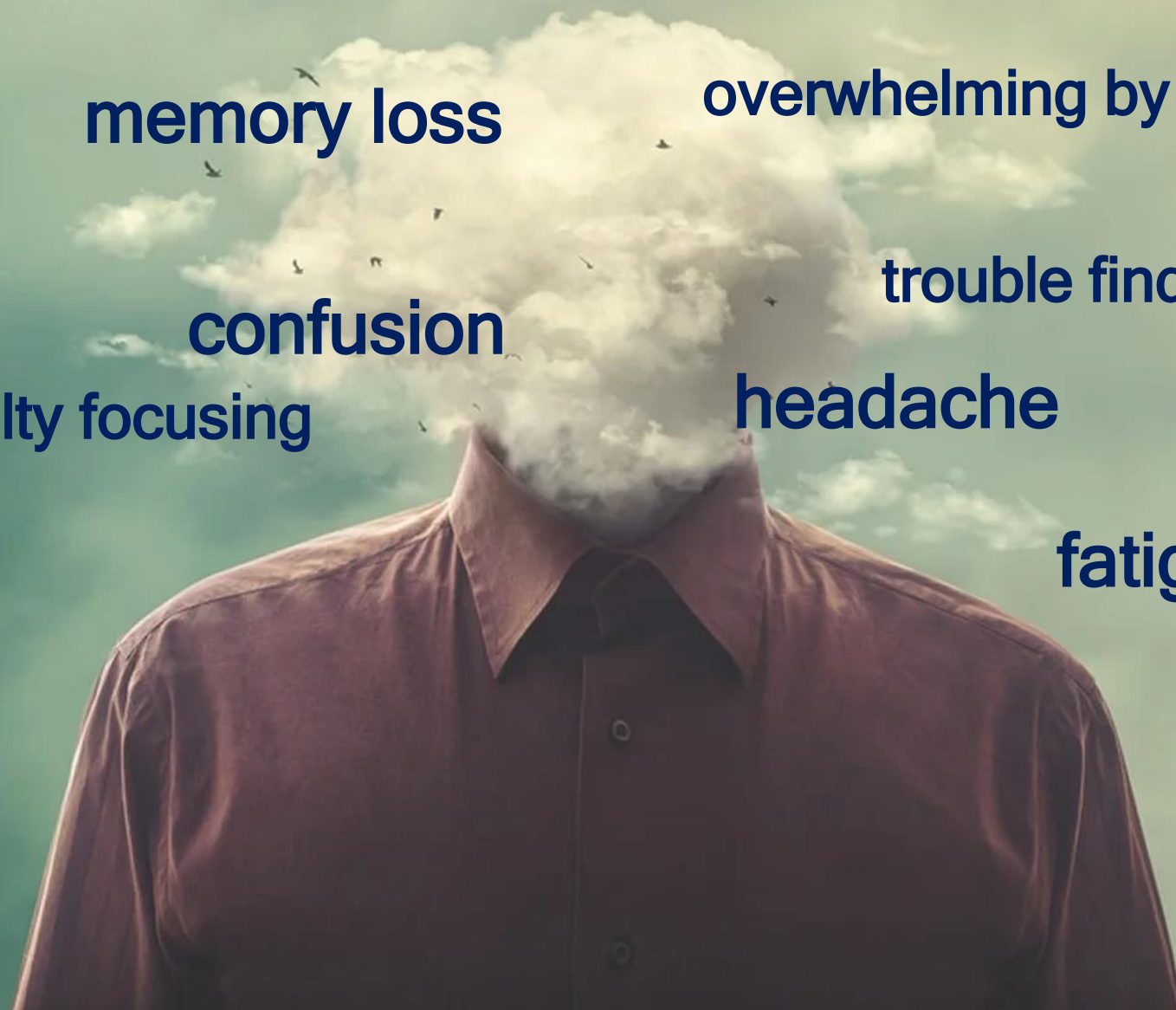
confusion

trouble finding words

difficulty focusing

headache

fatigue



Classification of COVID-19 patients

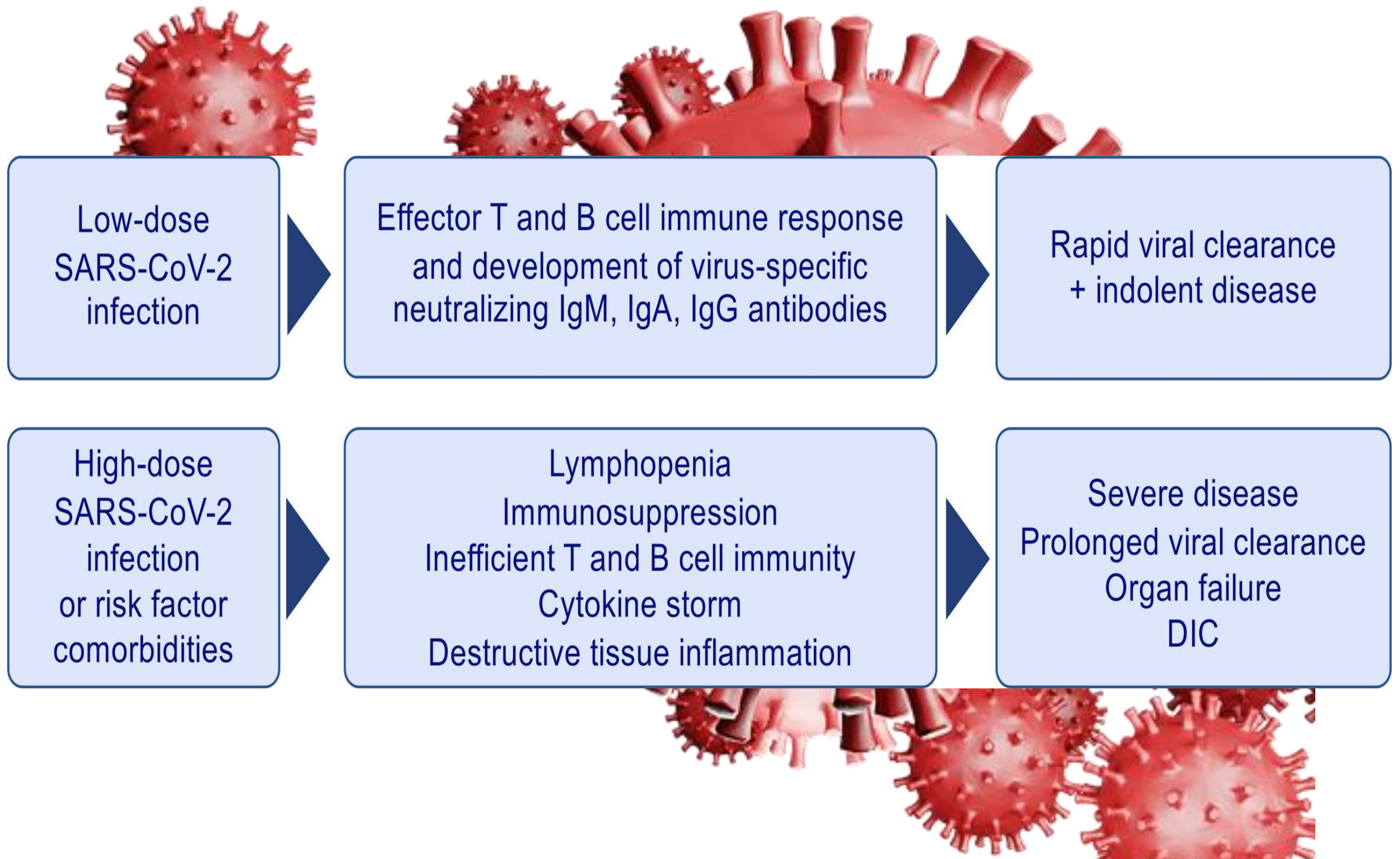
Asymptomatic	COVID nucleic acid test positive. Without any clinical symptoms and signs and the chest imaging is normal
Mild	Symptoms of acute upper respiratory tract infection (fever, fatigue, myalgia, cough, sore throat, runny nose, sneezing) or digestive symptoms (nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea)
Moderate	Pneumonia (frequent fever, cough) with no obvious hypoxemia, chest CT with lesions
Severe	Pneumonia with hypoxemia ($\text{SpO}_2 < 92\%$)
Critical	Acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), may have shock, encephalopathy, myocardial injury, heart failure, coagulation dysfunction and acute kidney injury

Key variables that can influence the severity of COVID-19

1. **Dosage** - small number = asymptomatic or mild infection
2. **Genetics** - receptor protein on the host cells are unique to each person
3. **Infection route** - via nose or mouth through aerosolized droplets from cough or sneeze vs. indirect route through contaminated surfaces = differ immune responses
4. **Virus virulence**
5. **Immune status** - infection with new foe may thwart rapid immune response and allow the virus to do more damage; virus has the capability to switch off chemical warnings (IFN γ)

Why COVID-19 is so severe in some individuals?

- **LUNGS DAMAGE** - SARS-CoV-2 kills lung cells and corrupts them too - cells have been fusing together into malfunctioning syncytia and lungs regeneration does not happen
- **STICKY BLOOD** - blood clotting goes strangely awry in COVID-19 - doctors are unable to get a line into a patient because it is immediately blocked with blood clots (blood-clotting chemicals in the blood are "200%, 300%, 400% higher" than normal in some patients)
- **UNCONTROLLED INFLAMMATION** - the virus can cause runaway inflammation in some patients, making the immune system go into overdrive, with damaging consequences for the rest of the body
- **We are fatter than we should be** - COVID-19 is worse in obese - generous waistline increases the risk of needing intensive care or death - this is unusual.....



Susceptible
animals

Clinically recovered
patients
but still virus-positive

Asymptomatic
carriers

COVID-19
spreaders

Current
symptomatic
patients

Recently infected
patients in incubation
period before onset
of symptoms

The study shows that events (crowding) where one person infects more than six other people are common



Why there is no effective treatment of COVID-19?

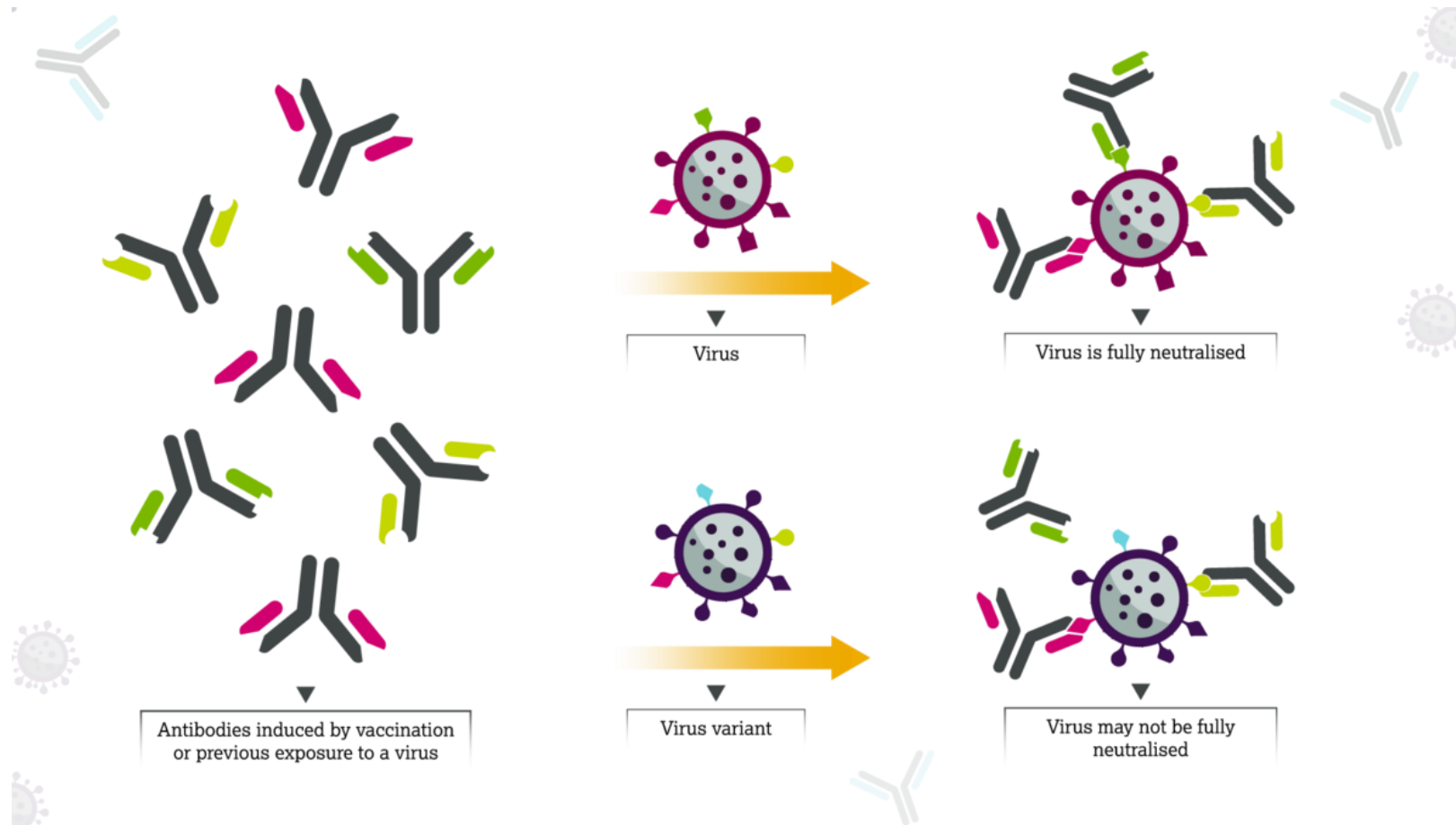
Examples only:

- Chloroquine, hydroxychloroquine
- Bevacizumab - recombinant monoclonal antibody against VEGF
- Protease inhibitors (lopinavir/ritonavir)
- Anticoagulants
- Inhibitors of viral entry
- Convalescent plasma with antibodies
- Inhibitors of cytokine storm (corticosteroids, sirolimus - prevents transplants rejection)
- Many others biologically tested or not approved yet
- Currently - **remdesivir, dexamethasone, heparin, baricitinib, tofacitinib, tocilizumab, or sarilumab**

Current clinical development of COVID-19 vaccines

Therapeutic agents	Properties	Organization/Company	Status
mRNA-1273	mRNA vaccine	Moderna and NIAID	Phase 2
BNT162	mRNA vaccine	BioNTech and Pfizer	Phase 1/2
INO-4800	DNA vaccine	Inovio Pharmaceuticals	Phase 1
AZD1222	Adenovirus vaccine	University of Oxford and AstraZeneca	Phase 2b/3
Ad5-nCoV	Adenovirus vaccine	CanSino Biologics	Phase 2
Unnamed	Inactivated virus	Wuhan Institute of Biological Products and Sinopharm	Phase 1/2
Unnamed	Inactivated virus	Beijing Institute of Biological Products and Sinopharm	Phase 1/2
PiCoVacc	Inactivated virus with adjuvant	Sinovac	Phase 1/2
Unnamed	Inactivated virus	Institute of Medical Biology and Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences	Phase 1
NVX-CoV2373	Protein subunit	Novavax	Phase 1/2

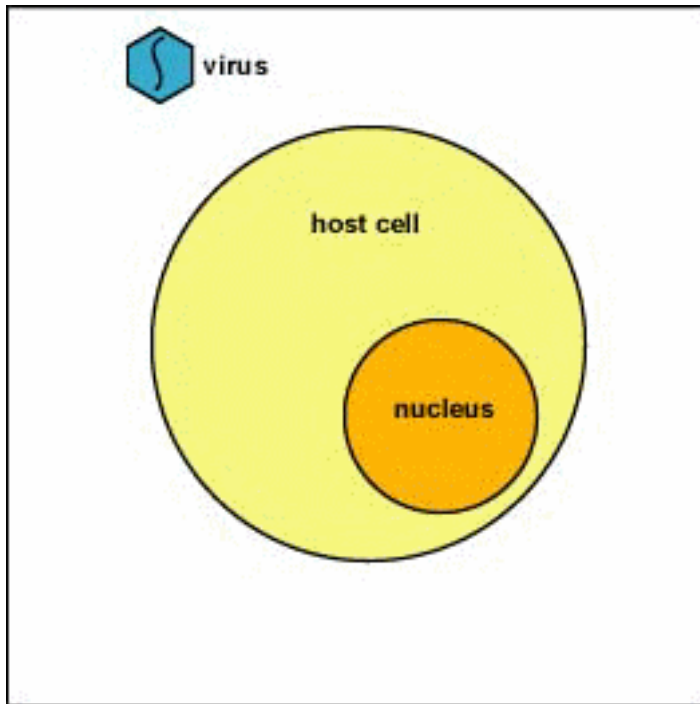
Why do vaccines against COVID-19 provide only short-lived immunity?



Clever virus

Brilliant cheater

it inhibits INF γ production
so well you do not even
know you are ill



It behaves like a „hit and run” killer

The amount of virus in human body begins to peak the day before someone begin to get sick... But it takes at least a week before COVID-19 progress to the overt disease - so, the virus spread on the next victims long before someone recover or die.....

...the virus doesn't care if you die

So new for humans'
organism...

quite a shock to our
immune system

It does peculiar and unexpected things to the body...

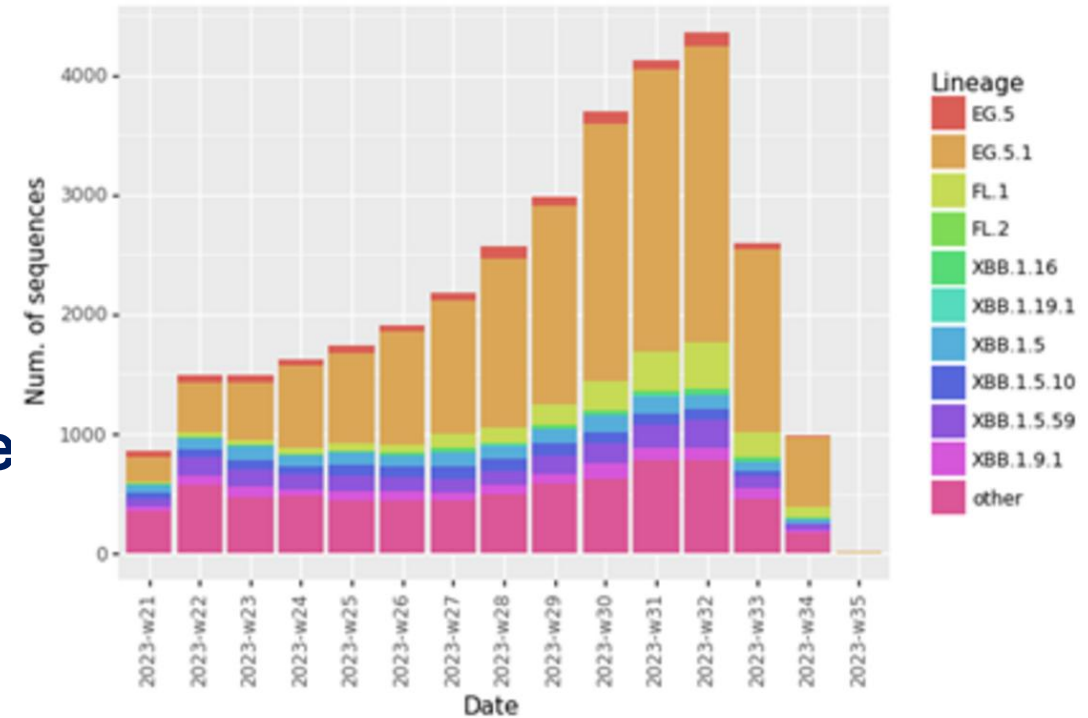
**A commonly observed
phenomenon in infectious
diseases is that pathogens
become less virulent as they
evolve in a human population**

New variants

Omicron subvariants: (EG.5) Eris; (FL.1) Fornax, (BA.2) Pirola Kraken (XBB.1.5) result of two BA.2 omicron variants

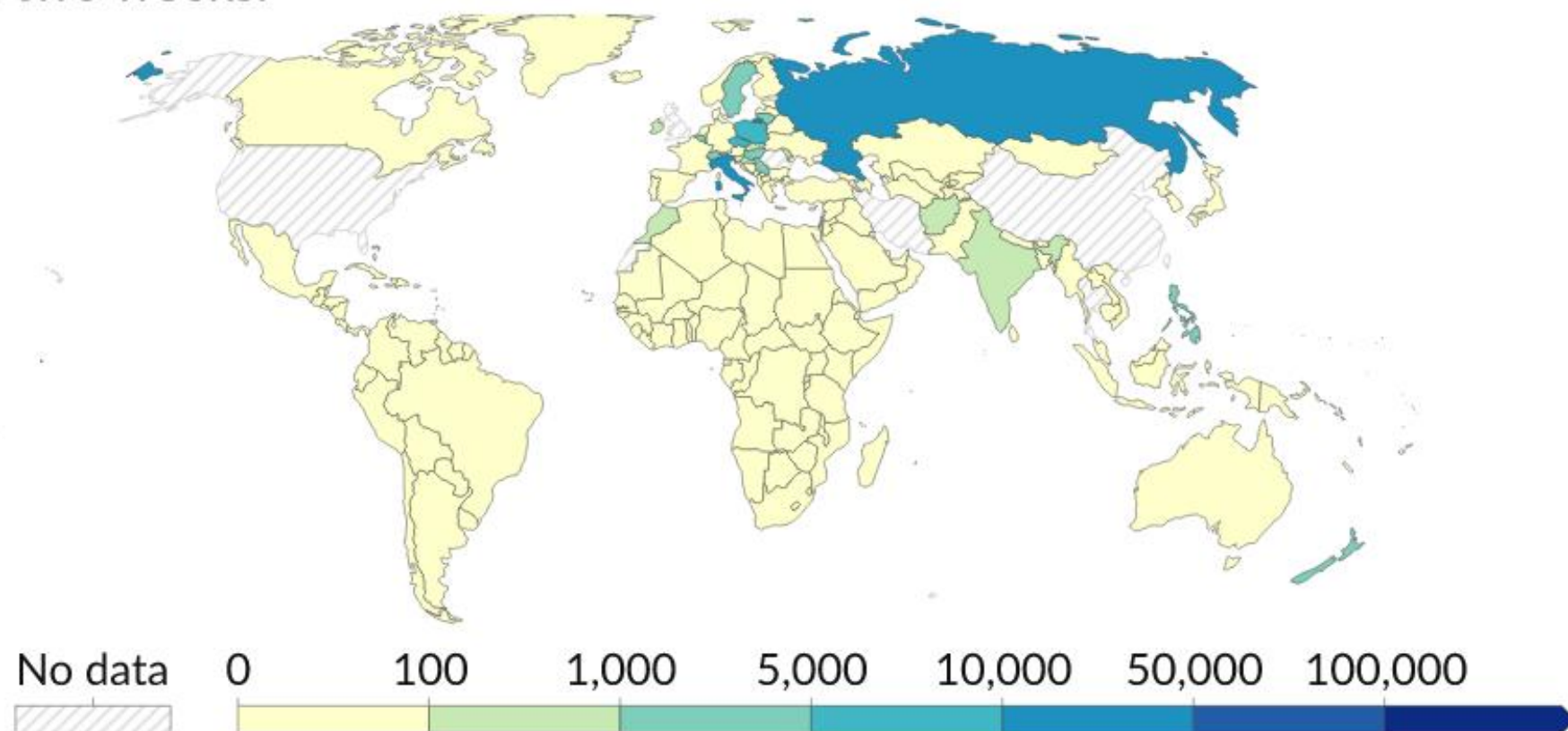
Characteristics:
stronger binding capabilities to the host cell receptor = more efficient at spreading and infection
symptoms similar to the prior strains - less severe disease

**COVID-19 new additional symptoms:
congestion/stuffy nose, nausea, diarrhea**



Biweekly confirmed COVID-19 cases, Nov 9, 2023

Biweekly confirmed cases refer to the cumulative number of confirmed cases over the previous two weeks.



Data source: WHO COVID-19 Dashboard

OurWorldInData.org/coronavirus | CC BY

COVID-19 as a zoonotic disease that has already spread globally to several millions of humans and probably animals, will be practically impossible to eradicate

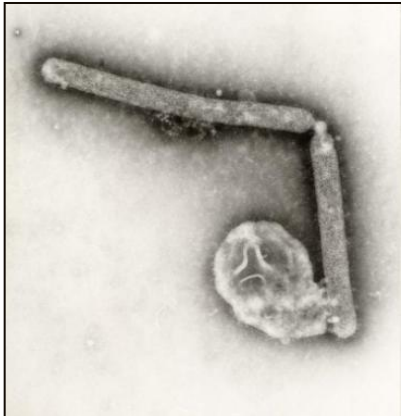
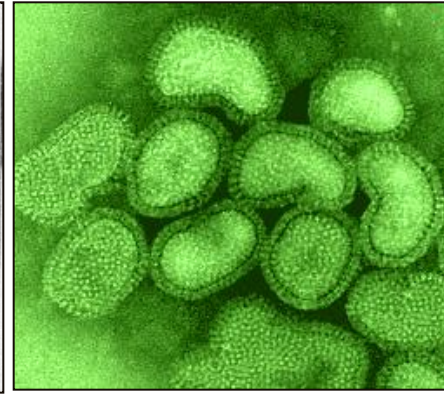
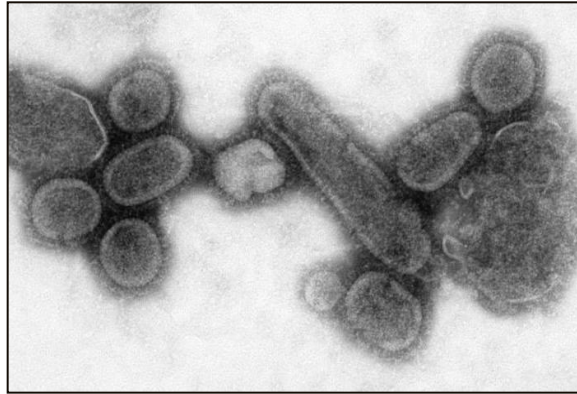
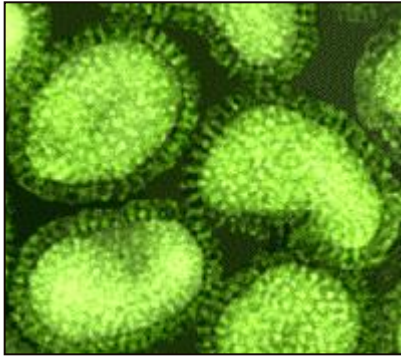
We have to learn how to live together with the virus and disease

Orthomyxovirus family

Genus:

Influenza type A, B, C

Virions are highly pleomorphic,
mostly spherical (80-120 nm diameter)
but many forms occur (filamentous)



Three main types:

Influenza A - main human pathogen associated with epidemics & pandemics

infects multiple species: a wide variety of mammals (man, horses, pigs) & birds

birds = important natural reservoirs

Influenza B - infects mammals only (epidemics)

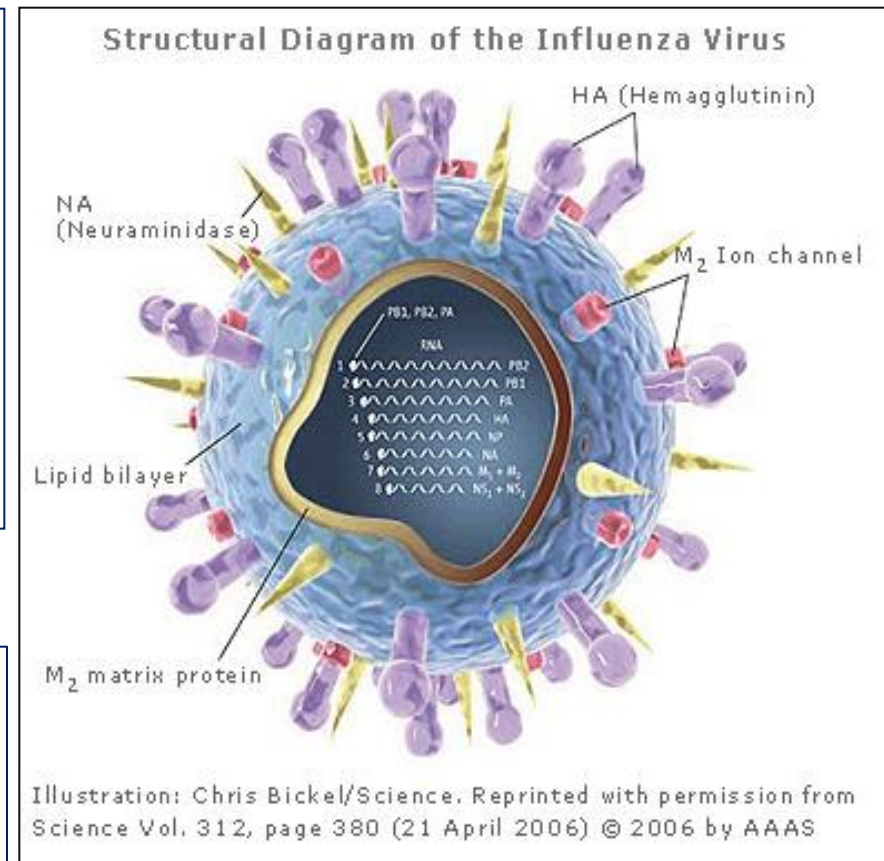
Influenza C - infects human & swine (mild cases)

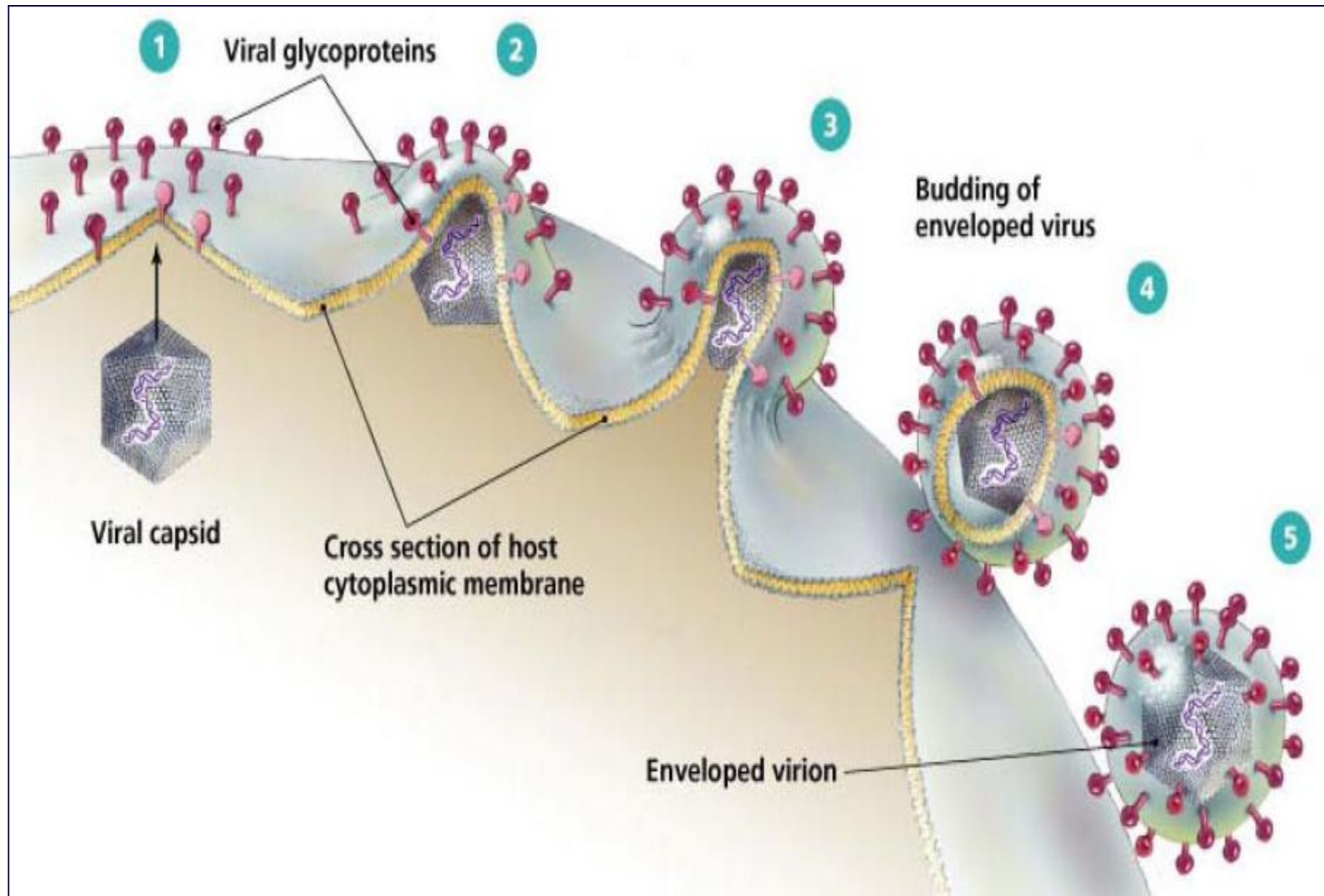
Influenza virus

- Lipid envelope with glycoprotein spikes of two types:
- hemagglutinin (HA)
- neuraminidase (NA)
- RNA (-) segmented
- Virus particles labile - sensitive to drying

- HA - there are 18 known serotypes
- HA 1, 2 & 3 - found in human viruses
- 13 others HA antigens - found in animal flu viruses

- NA - there are 11 known serotypes
- NA 1 & 2 - found in human viruses
- others NA - found in animal viruses





How influenza virus can change

- Mutations in flu virus occur frequently
- Mutations in the surface HA & NA allow the virus to elude some host immunity

Antigenic shift

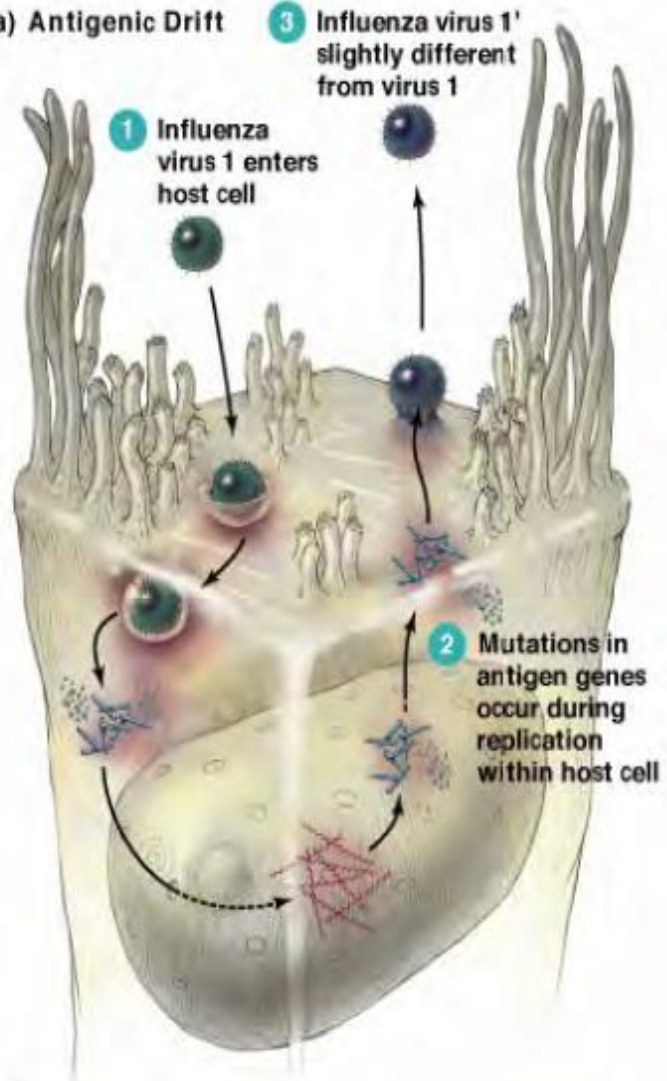
- Gene reassortment
- Host cell infected simultaneously with viruses of two different strains
- Type A viruses only

Influenza virus can change in two different ways:

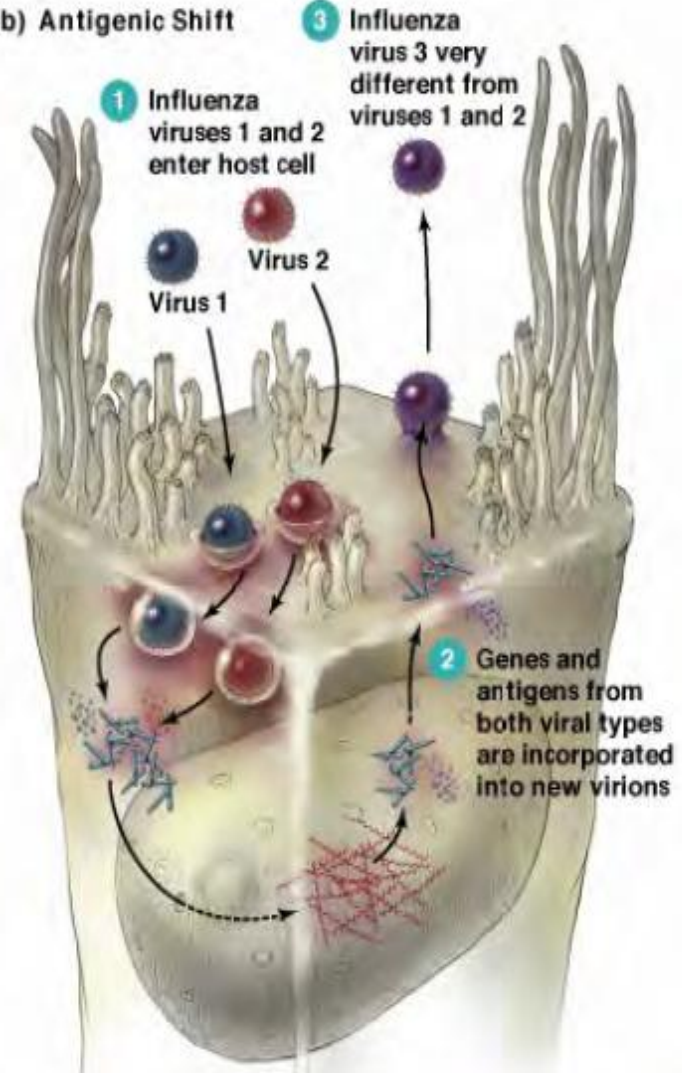
Antigenic drift

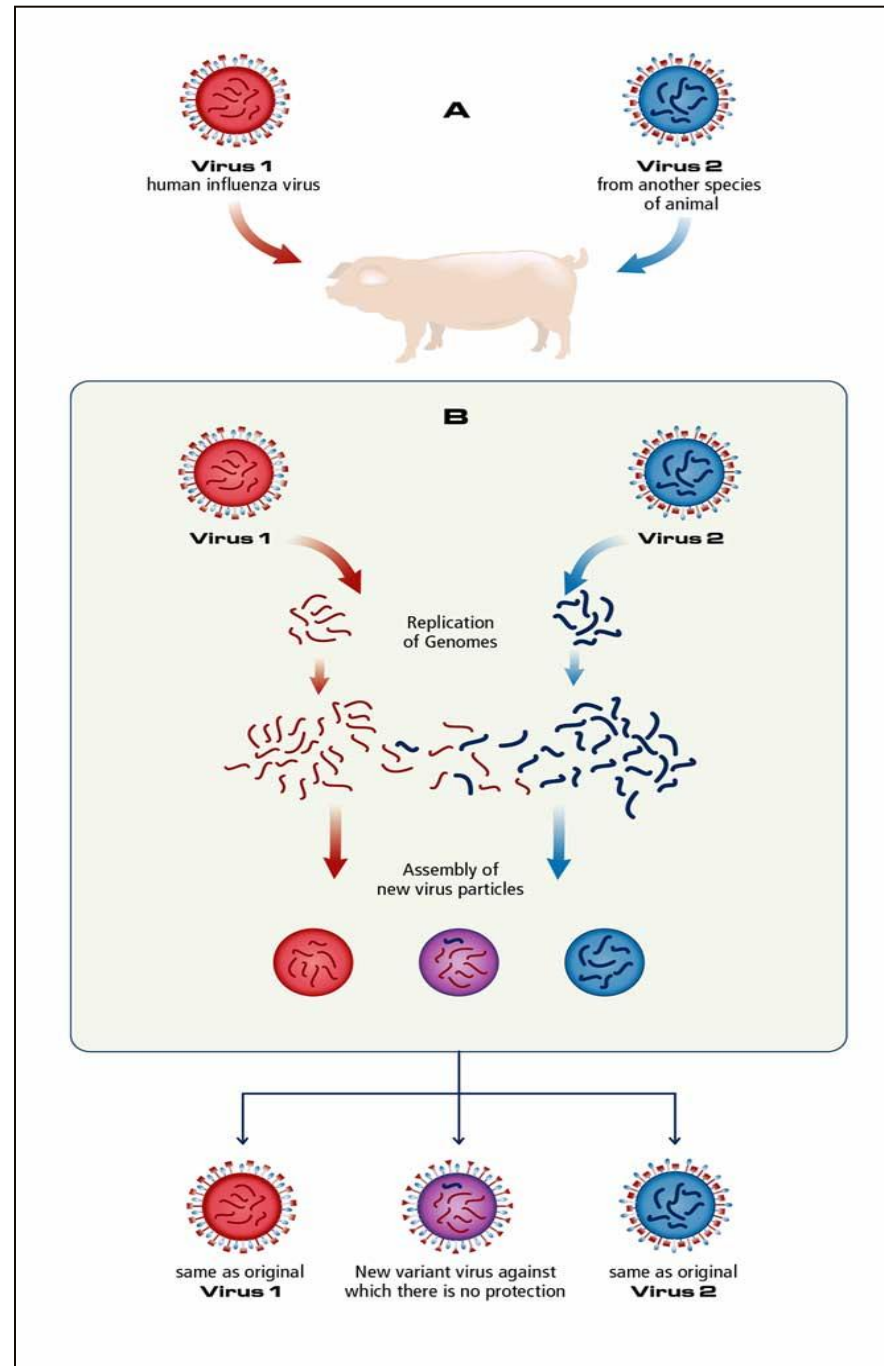
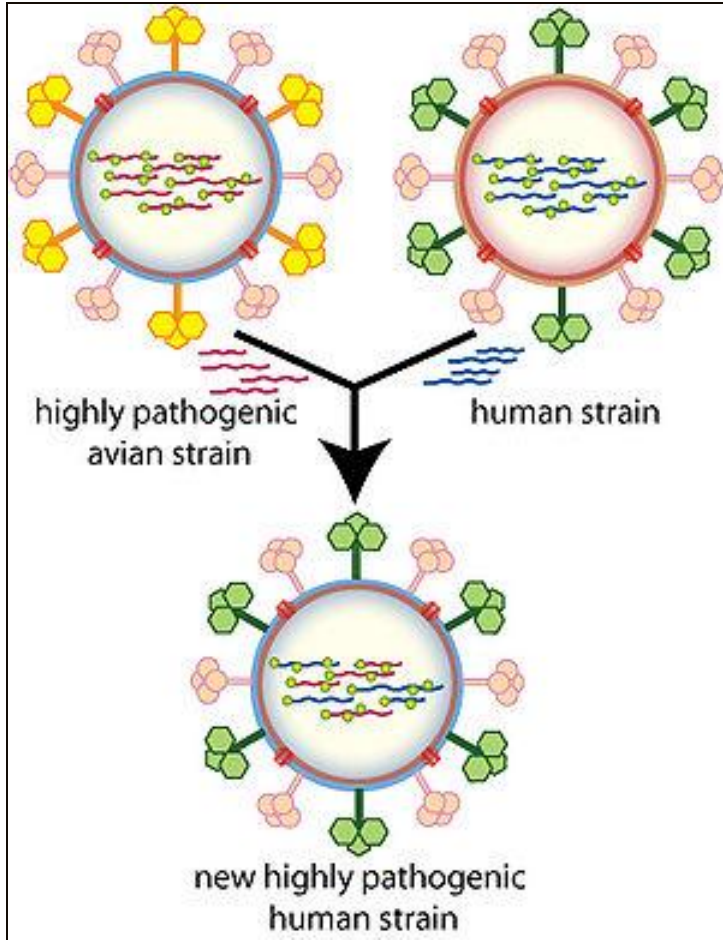
- The process of random accumulation of mutations in viral genes recognized by host's immune system
- Natural mutation over time of known strains of influenza
- Results in sporadic outbreaks & limited epidemics
- May allow the virus to jump to a new host species
- The process occurs in all types of influenza viruses - A, B & C

(a) Antigenic Drift

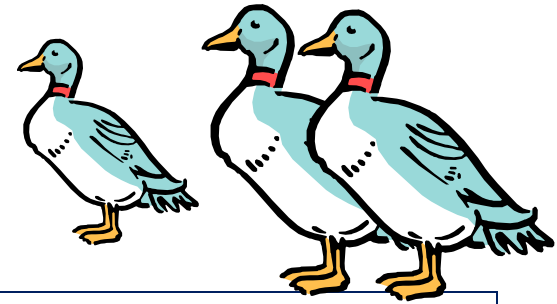


(b) Antigenic Shift





Influenza A

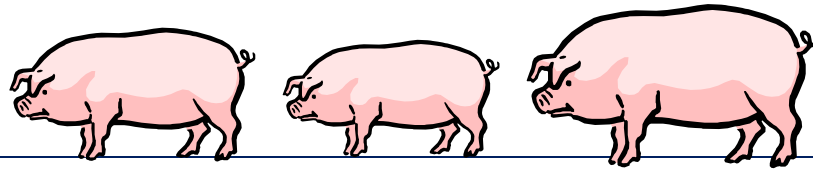


- Several human strains are type A, while all avian strains are type A
- The most virulent group, although not all strains cause disease
- Classified into subtypes based on two surface antigens: HA & NA

A/Missisipi/1/22 (H3N2)

Influenza B

- Influenza type B viruses infect mostly humans
- They are not categorized into subtypes
- They are quite common, but clinical disease is usually less severe than influenza type A
- Epidemics do occur, but are seen less often than type A
- Human seasonal vaccines usually contain two strains of influenza A & one strain of B



Influenza C

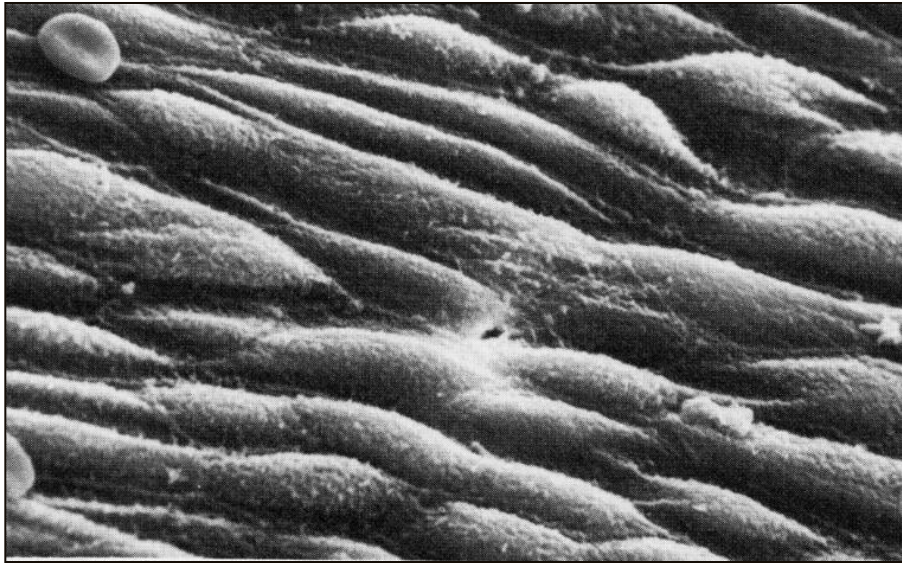
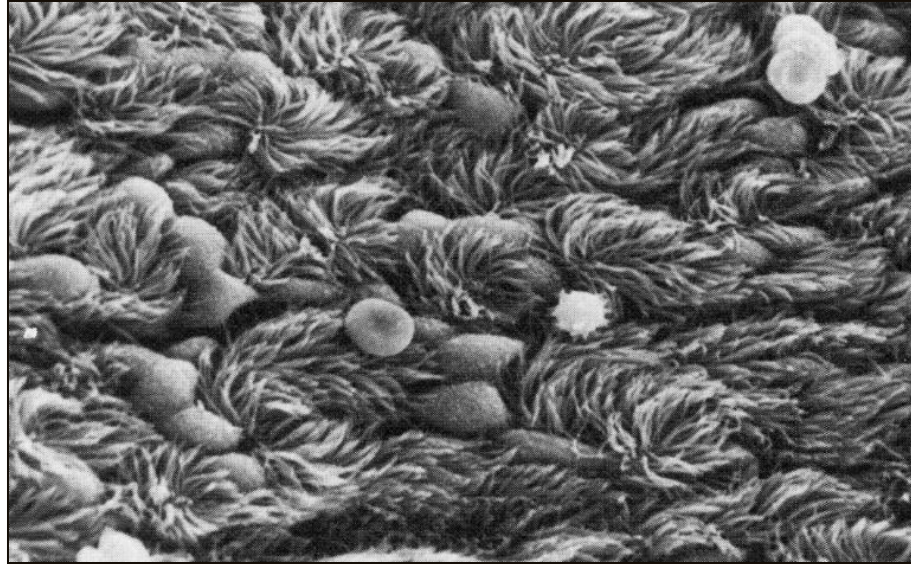
- Influenza C - identified in both humans & swine
- They are rare & usually produce mild or no clinical symptoms (non-epidemic)
- Most individuals have antibodies to influenza C by the age of 15

- Small particle aerosols that can get into respiratory tract
- Can survive for a short time on surfaces & can be spread by introduction into nasal mucosa

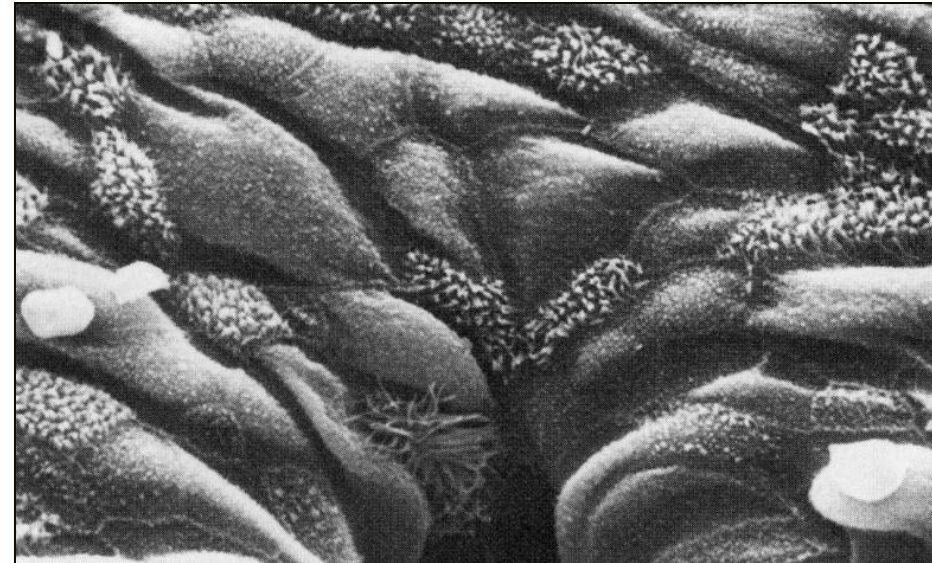


- Primary infection - ciliated epithelial cells of the URT
- Infected cells die due to:
 - the direct effects of the virus on the cell
 - the effects of interferon
 - actions of cytotoxic T cells (at later times)
- Result: reduced efficiency of ciliary clearance = secondary bacterial infections (Str. pneumoniae, St. aureus, H. influenzae)

Normal mucous membrane of bronchi



3 days after infection



7 days after infection

Table 4. Influenza or common cold ?

Symptoms	Influenza	Cold
Fever	Usually high, lasts 3–4 days	Unusual
Headache	Yes	Unusual
Fatigue and/or weakness	Can last up to 2–3 weeks	Mild
Pains, aches	Usual and often severe	Slight
Exhaustion	Early and sometimes severe	Never
Stuffy nose	Sometimes	Common
Sore throat	Sometimes	Common
Cough	Yes	Unusual
Chest discomfort	Common and sometimes severe	Mild to moderate
Complications	Bronchitis, pneumonia; in severe cases life-threatening	Sinus congestion

Influenza -complications

Pulmonary complication: **croup**
(acute laryngotracheobronchitis)
in young children, primary
influenza virus pneumonia,
secondary bacterial pneumonia

Flu is more severe in:
very young children (under 5
years of age) - lack of protective
antibodies, inflammation &
swelling can lead to blockage of
LRT, sinus system, Eustachian
tubes)
elderly - underlying decreased
effectiveness of the immune
system & chronic obstructive
pulmonary disease or cardiac
disease

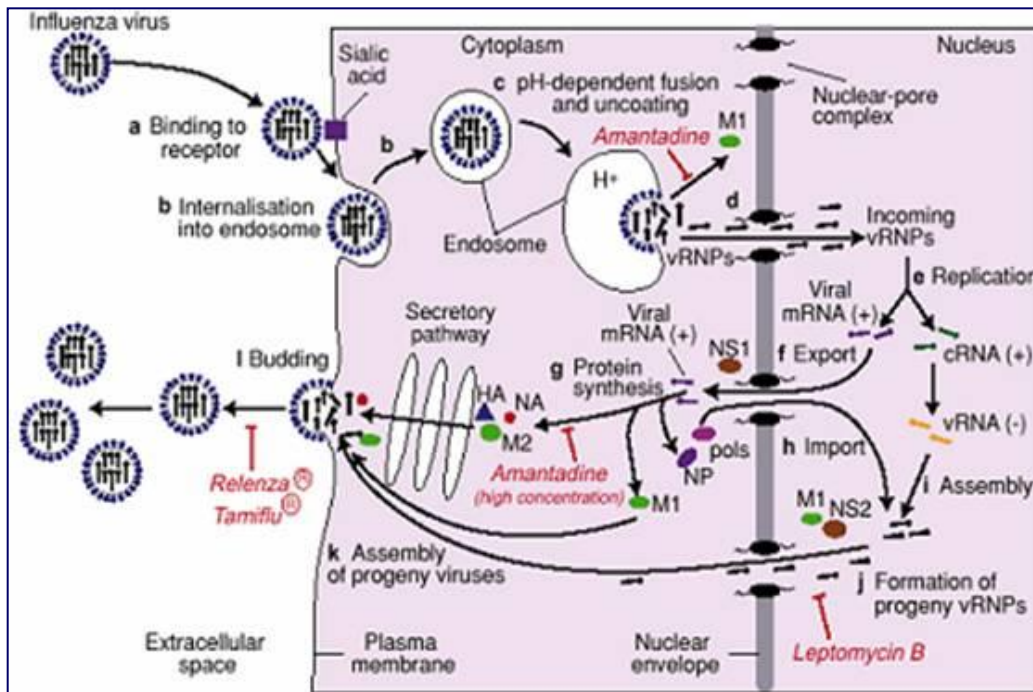
Non-pulmonary:

- **myositis** - rare, more likely in children
after influenza type B infection
- **cardiac complications**
- **encephalopathy**
- **Reye's syndrome** - primarily children's
disease; most harmful to the brain
(oedema) & the liver (fatty deposits)
- **Guillain-Barre syndrome** (acute
idiopathic polyneuritis) - an
autoimmune disease

Major cause of death - bacterial
pneumonia & cardiac failure
90% of deaths in people under
65 years of age

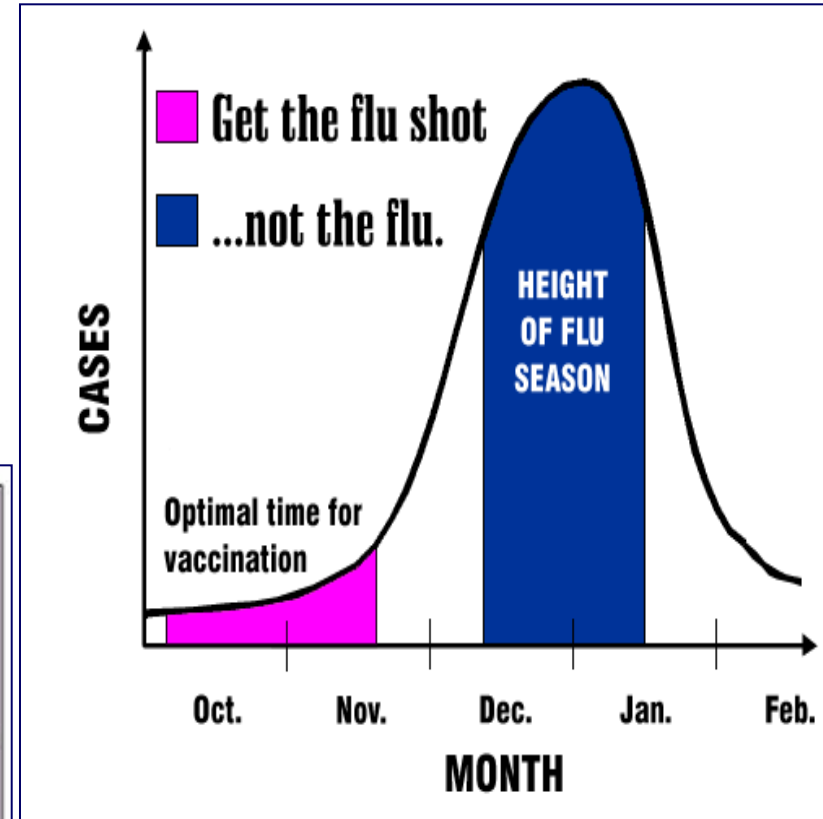
Treatment & prevention

- RIMANTADINE & AMANTADINE
type A only
- ZANAMIVIR
types A & B
- OSELTAMIVIR
types A i B



Replication cycle of an influenza virus

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Protect yourself from Covid-19 and flu!



Answer questions

- **What factors contribute to the development of brain fog after acute COVID-19 illness?**
- **What symptoms are present in patients with critical COVID-19?**
- **Which flu viruses cause a pandemic and why?**
- **Give examples of antiviral drugs active against flu viruses.**
- **What is antigenic drift and antigenic shift occurring in flu viruses?**



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Thank you for your attention!

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