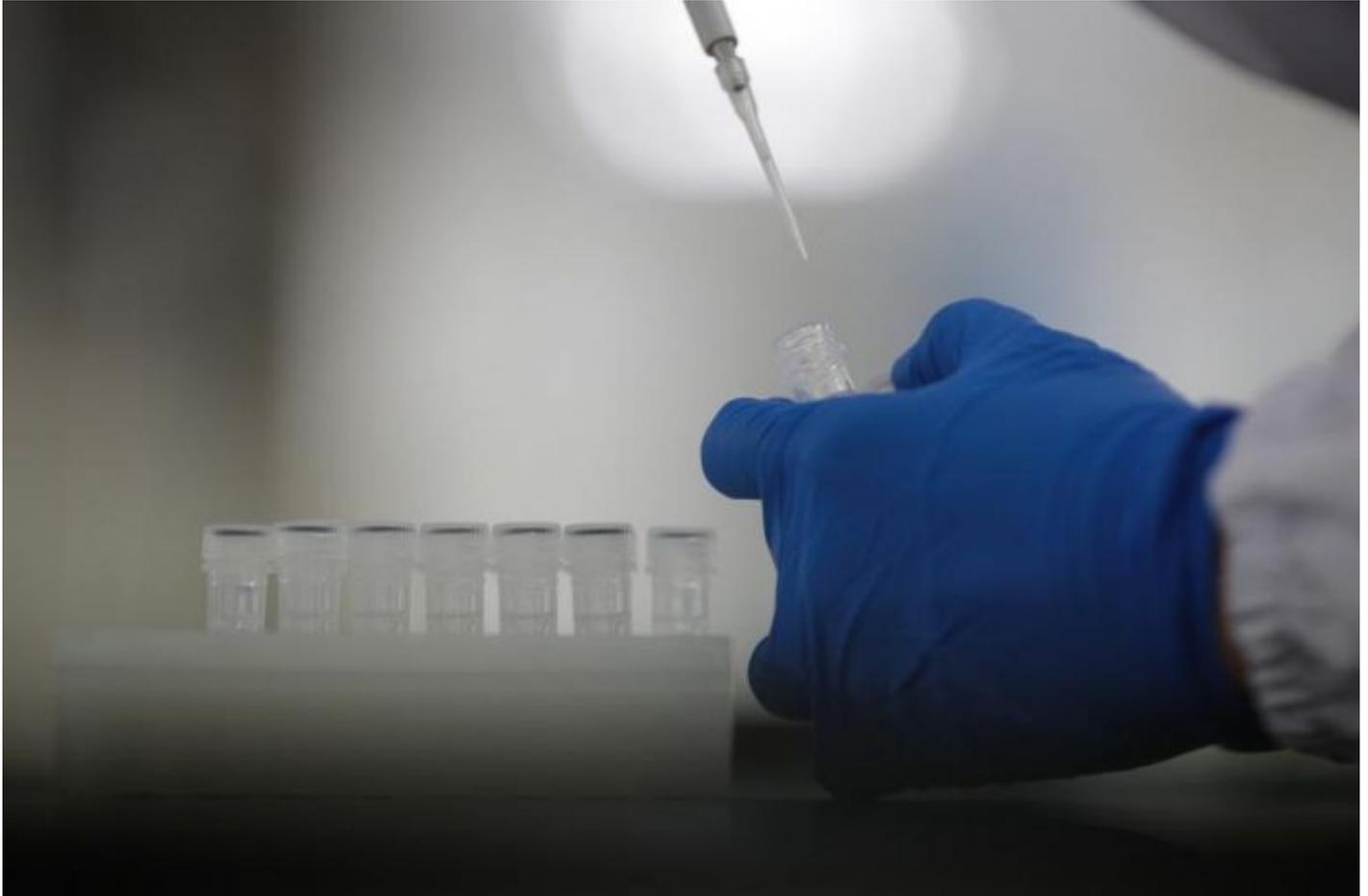


THE STRAITS TIMES

Coronavirus: Patients in Singapore keen to help research into virus that originated in Wuhan



Researchers need to take samples of throat swabs, blood, urine, stools and tears from patients to study the coronavirus as well as people's immune response. ST PHOTO: JASON QUAH

🕒 PUBLISHED FEB 10, 2020, 7:03 PM SGT

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SINGAPORE - The majority of coronavirus patients here are eager to help researchers understand the outbreak.

Associate Professor David Lye, director of infectious disease research at the National Centre for Infectious Diseases (NCID), said many agreed to offer samples before he could explain everything to them.

Researchers need to take samples of throat swabs, blood, urine, stools and tears from patients to study the virus as well as people's immune response, said Prof Lye.

But even though the patients were enthusiastic about helping, he still made it a point to spell out everything to them before accepting their agreement to help with the research, as is mandated for such research.

He said: "Some of them feel guilty and want to do all they can to help. We tell them, there is no reason for you to feel guilty. It's not your fault you are sick."

So far, 19 patients in Singapore have agreed to help researchers understand the virus better by donating samples. They include the very first patient, who is from Wuhan.

Only two have refused so far, he said.

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Researchers have yet to approach the more recently warded patients.

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