



Health Protection Agency
Centre for Infections
61 Colindale Avenue
London NW9 5EQ



Exposure assessment for airb

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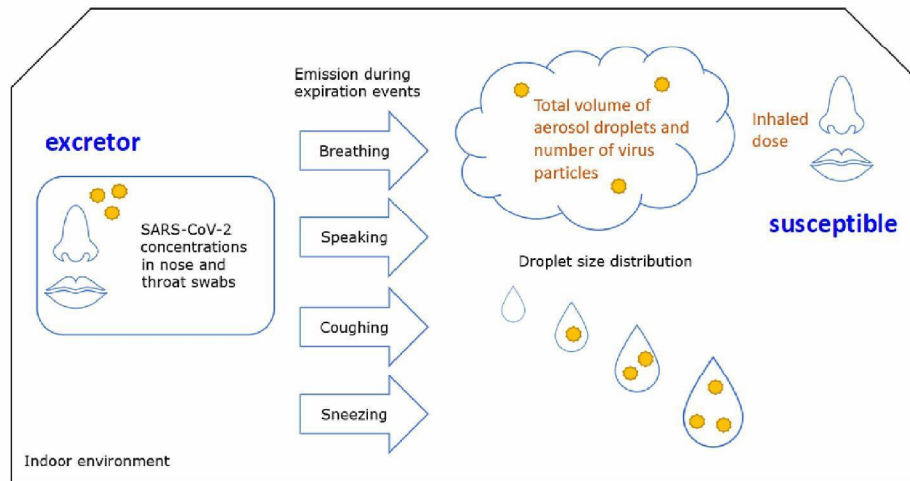
*shared first author

EA Airborne Transmission SARS-CoV-2



Aim and approach

Assess exposure to airborne SARS-CoV-2 particles from breathing, speaking, coughing and sneezing in an indoor environment.



Limitations

Nr of infectious viruses in the droplets is unknown
 Infectious dose is unknown (P_{exposure} , not P_{inf})
 complete & instant mixing is assumed



Scenarios

Expelling of virus by one infected person in all scenarios

Abbreviation	Source	Reference of size distribution data
Breath	20 minutes breathing	Fabian et al. (2011)
Speak-Lo	20 minutes speaking	Asadi (2019)
Speak-Hi	20 minutes speaking	Duguid (1946)
Cough-Lo	One cough	Lindsley et al. (2012)
Cough-Hi	One cough	Duguid (1946)
Sneeze-Lo	One sneeze	Gerone et al. (1966)
Sneeze-Hi	One sneeze	Duguid (1946)

Exposure of one or more uninfected persons

One person in a bus for 20 minutes
 Thirty persons in a bus for 20 minutes
 Ten persons in a room for one hour
 Ten persons in a room for four hours

Virus concentration in mucus 10^3 , 10^4 , 10^5 , 10^6 , 10^7 , 10^8 , 10^9 , 10^{11} virus particles per mL

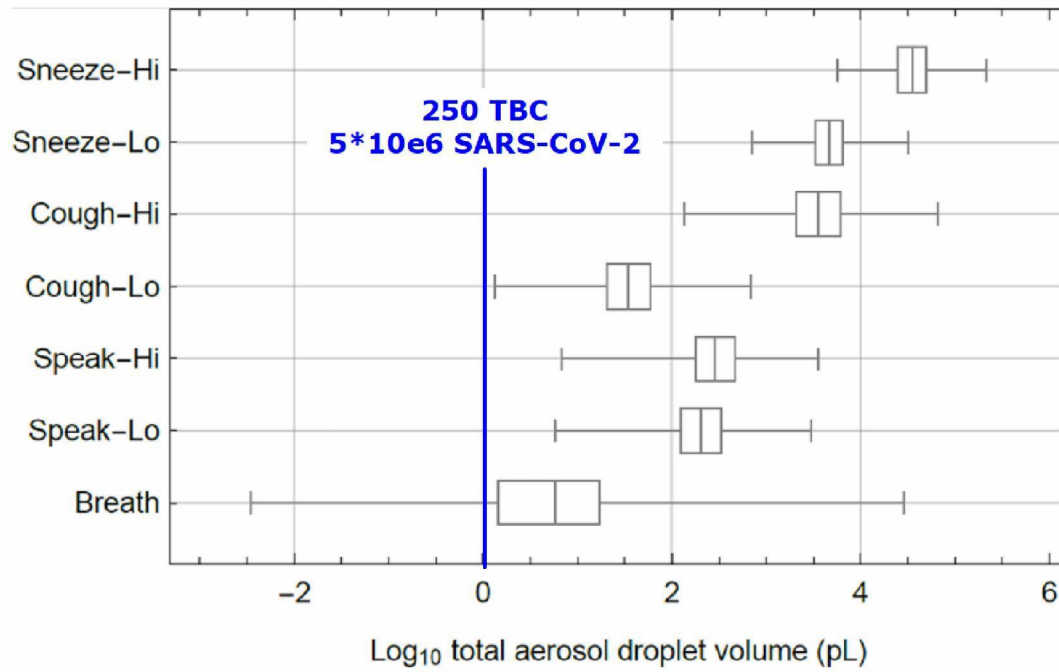


Dose D and probability of exposure P_{exp}

- $D \sim \text{Pois}\left(\frac{C V_{br,sp,co,sn}}{V_r} v_{inh} S\right)$

- D = dose (number of inhaled virus particles)
- C = virus concentration in mucus (numbers per ml)
- $V_{br,sp,co,sn}$ = total volume of aerosol droplets (initial diameter $< 60\mu\text{m}$)
- V_r = volume of the air in a room
- V_{inh} is inhalation rate (liter/minute)
- S = sensitivity factor (can also be number of exposed persons)

- $P_{exp} = 1 - e^{-D}$
 - If D increases, P_{exp} closer to 1
 - If D is very small, P_{exp} closer to 0



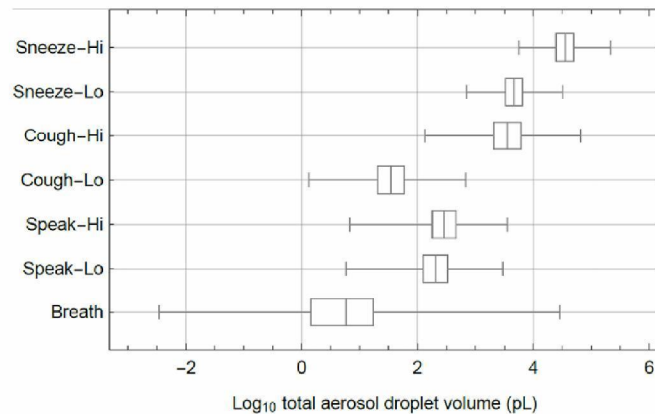
VARIATION



Probability of exposure, P_{exp}

Reference scenario ($S = 1$)

- 1 person expels virus for 20 min by speaking or breathing, or 1 sneeze or cough
- 1 person in a bus for 20 min ($V = 12 \times 2.55 \times 3.05 \text{ m}^3 = 93 \text{ m}^3$)



$$\bullet D \sim \text{Pois}\left(\frac{c v_{br,sp,co,sn}}{v_r} v_{inh} S\right)$$

$$\bullet P_{exp} = 1 - e^{-D}$$

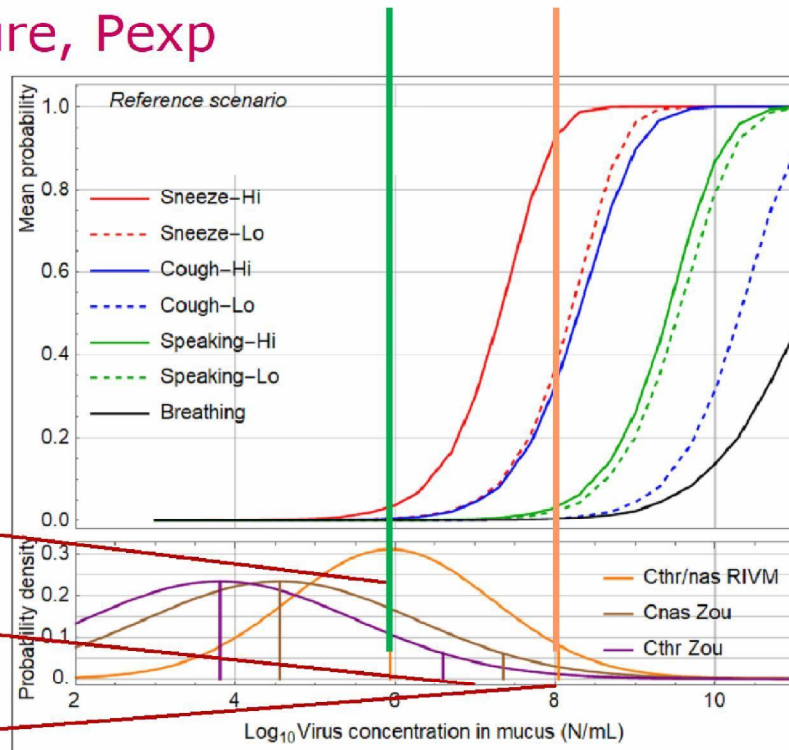
Note: Inhalation (V_{inh}) is about 5-12 L/min, eg 300-700 L/h



Probability of exposure, P_{exp}

Mean P_{exp} in scenario 10⁸/mL

- Sneeze-Hi 93%
- Sneeze-Lo 34%
- Cough-Hi 32%
- Speaking-Hi 3%
- Speaking-Lo 2%
- Cough-Lo 0.3%
- Breathing 0.3%



Nasopharyngeal swab at Ct 25-26

50% ≥10⁶/ml

20% ≥10⁷/ml

Ct 18-19

5% ≥10⁸/ml



Probability of exposure, P_{exp}

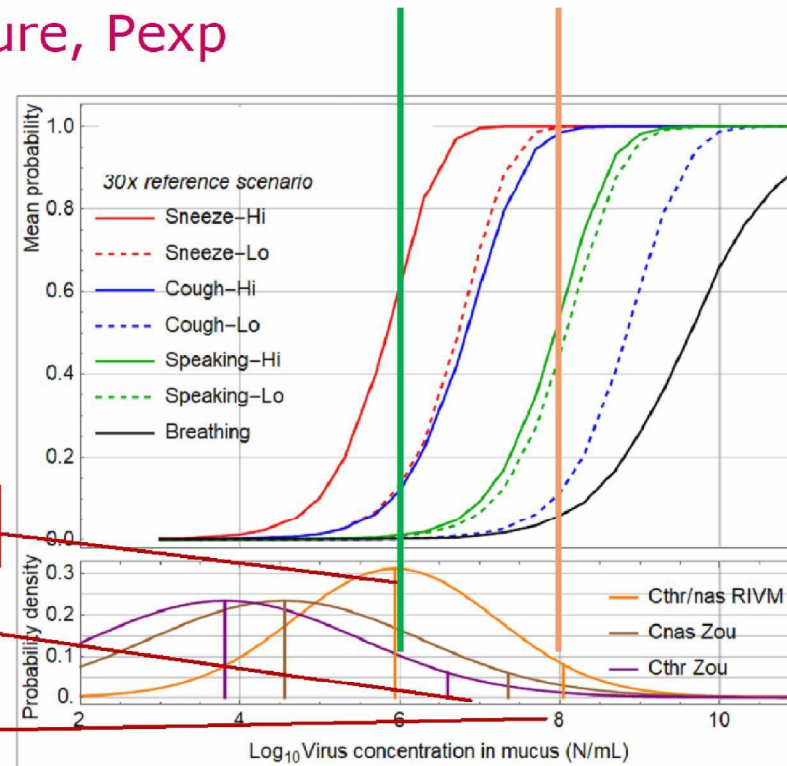
- 1 person expels virus for 20 min.
- 30 persons in a bus for 20 min.
(30x reference scenario, $S=30$)
- Mean P_{exp} in scenario $10^8/\text{mL}$

Sneeze-Hi 100%
 Sneeze-Lo 100%
 Cough-Hi 98%
 Speaking-Hi 55%
 Speaking-Lo 46%
 Cough-Lo 11%
 Breathing 6%

50%
 $\geq 10^6/\text{mL}$

20%
 $\geq 10^7/\text{mL}$

5%
 $\geq 10^8/\text{mL}$





Probability of exposure, P_{exp}

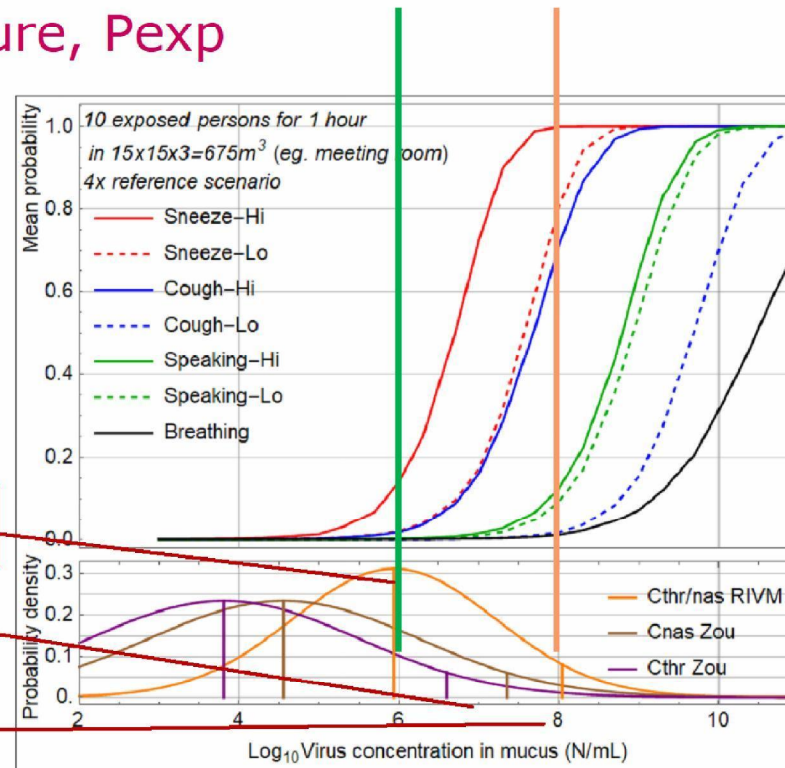
- 1 person expels virus for 20 min.
- 10 persons in a meeting room for 1 hour
(4x reference scenario, $S=4$)
- Mean P_{exp} in scenario 10^8 /ml

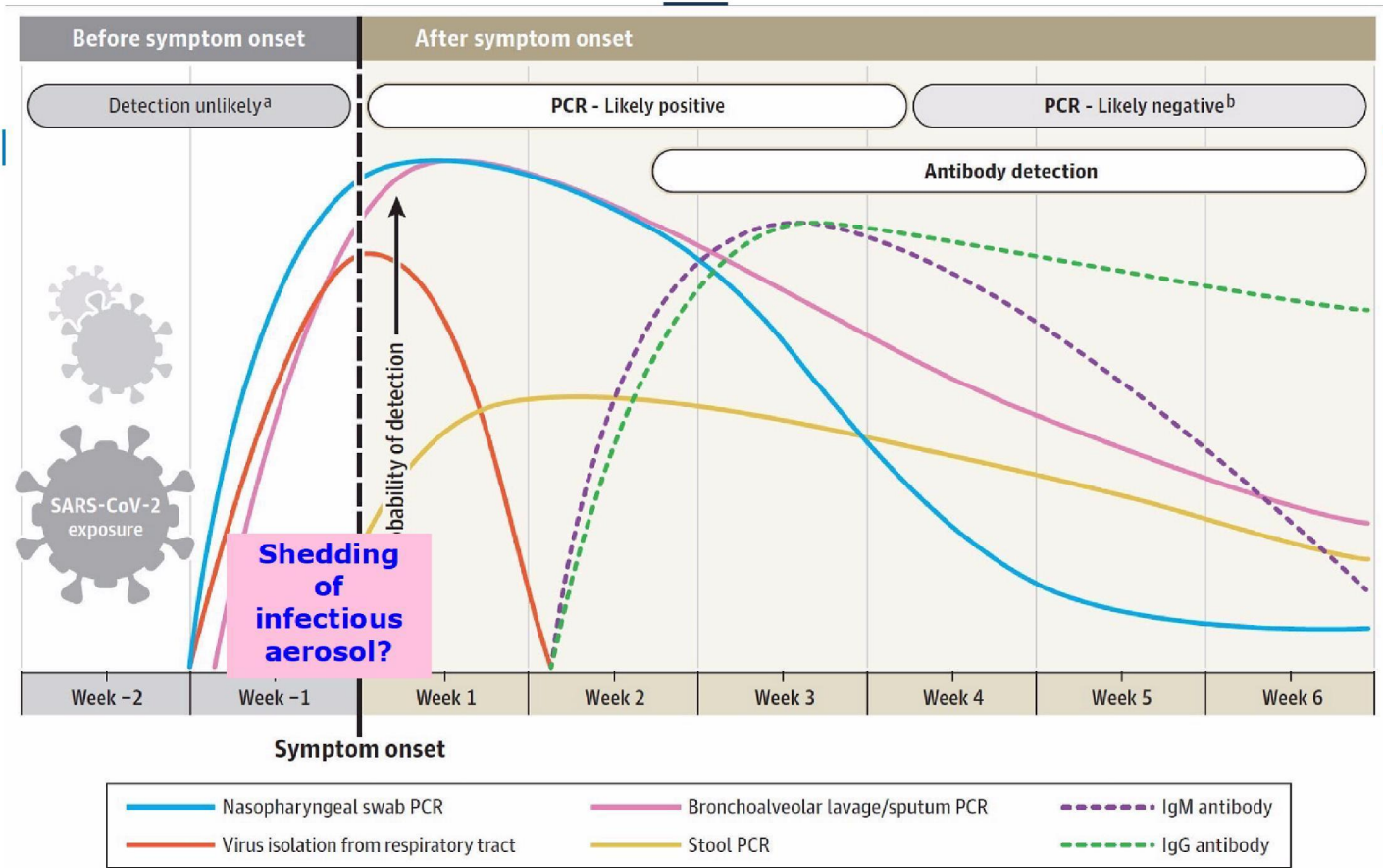
Sneeze-Hi 100%
 Sneeze-Lo 80%
 Cough-Hi 71%
 Speaking-Hi 12%
 Speaking-Lo 9%
 Cough-Lo 2%
 Breathing 1%

50%
 $\geq 10^6$ /ml

20%
 $\geq 10^7$ /ml

5%
 $\geq 10^8$ /ml







Conclusions

- **Size distribution and amounts of aerosol droplets** generated by breathing, speaking, coughing and sneezing **vary widely**.
- **Number of viruses expelled vary widely**

This study suggests:

- > The average or low end excretor is unlikely to participate significantly in transmission of SARS-CoV-2 via aerosols
- > High end excretors are very likely to transmit SARS-CoV-2 via aerosols

Aerosol transmission of SARS-CoV-2 is possible and cannot be ignored