

The Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education

Press Release

【For immediate release】

Public Health Experts Hold Online Talk on COVID-19

(Hong Kong – 8 March 2020) The coronavirus, COVID-19, does not deter students from chasing knowledge. To satisfy students' hunger for learning, The Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education (HKAGE) and The Hong Kong Young Academy of Sciences (YASHK) will co-organise an online seminar titled '**Update on COVID-19 from Expert Local Scientists**' (the webinar). For the best interest of the Hong Kong community, this online talk does not just open to the student members of HKAGE and the student participants of the Hong Kong Academy of Sciences (ASHK) mentorship programme, but also to all the public members of our society who are interested in this topic.

This webinar will be kick-started by **Professor Lap-chee TSUI** who will deliver an opening speech in his capacity as the President of The Hong Kong Academy of Sciences. With the moderation of **Dr Stephanie MA** of the School of Biomedical Sciences of the University of Hong Kong, two public health experts, **Professor Leo POON** and **Professor Ben COWLING** of the School of Public Health of The University of Hong Kong will share with you on their insights of this coronavirus and answer your questions through the online platform.

The details are as follows:

Date: 14 March 2020 (Saturday)

Time: 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Language: English / Cantonese

Registration: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_tDSRLX3oSJGIRB0hvABq2w

Student members of the HKAGE, members of YASHK and public members who are interested in this topic are welcome to register through the registration link. A maximum of 500 registered participants can be served and they will enjoy the privilege to have live chat with the speakers through this online platform.

Non-registered audience members can also enjoy this talk live through the YouTube channel of the HKAGE at <https://www.youtube.com/user/TheHKAGE>.

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About the Speakers

Professor Leo POON:

Professor POON received his doctoral training as a Croucher Scholar in the Sir William Dunn School of Pathology at the University of Oxford (1996-1999). He returned to Hong Kong in 1999 and joined the University of Hong Kong (HKU) as a Research Assistant Professor in 2001. He currently serves as a Professor in the School of Public Health of HKU.

Professor Poon is a molecular virologist and he studies viruses of global health concern. His research helps to reveal the biology of influenza viruses and coronaviruses and facilitates the development of control measures against these pathogens. He has published over 200 peer-reviewed articles. He has been ranked in the top 1% of the world's most-cited scientists each year since 2005 by Clarivate Analytics. He was awarded a Senior Research Fellowship by the Croucher Foundation in 2017. He was elected as Fellow in Faculty of Public Health (UK) in 2017 and as a Founding Member of the Hong Kong Young Academy of Sciences in 2018.

Professor Poon serves as an expert for several international organisations. He is a committee member in the Coronavirus Study Group under the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses (since 2006) and he is also an expert in the Influenza Molecular Diagnosis Working Group of the World Health Organization (since 2009). He serves as an ad hoc consultant for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and for the World Organization for Animal Health for controlling MERS coronavirus.

Professor Benjamin COWLING

Professor COWLING joined the School of Public Health (SPH) at HKU in 2004 after completing a PhD in medical statistics at the University of Warwick (UK). He has been the Head of the Division of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the HKU School of Public Health since 2013. He has been doing research in infectious disease epidemiology. In recent years he has designed and implemented large field studies of influenza transmission in the community and the effectiveness and impact of control measures, including large vaccine trials. His latest research has focused on the modes of respiratory virus transmission, influenza vaccination effectiveness, and the link between individual immunity and population immunity to infections.

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Professor COWLING is a fellow of the Royal Statistical Society and a Fellow of the UK Faculty of Public Health. He is the Editor-in-Chief of Influenza and Other Respiratory Viruses, an Associate Editor of Emerging Infectious Diseases. He has more than 400 journal publications listed in Scopus and has received numerous awards including HKU Outstanding Young Researcher Award (2011), Croucher Senior Research Fellowship (2015), and HKU Outstanding Researcher Award (2017). He is a Founding Member of the Hong Kong Young Academy of Sciences.

The Hong Kong Young Academy of Sciences was established in 2018, as a chapter of The Hong Kong Academy of Sciences (ASHK). The YASHK is formed by a vibrant group of aspiring young scientists, working as Faculty members at various tertiary institutes in Hong Kong, and dedicated to serving the community. One of the primary goals of the Young Academy is to enhance the research and education environment for science and technology in the Hong Kong community via outreach activities.

The Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education, a subvented non-governmental organisation, was established in 2008. It aims at serving the education sector in Hong Kong, offering the latest information, support and appropriate learning opportunities to gifted students, their parents, teachers and other stakeholders engaged in gifted education. Most of its programmes are provided free-of-charge.

For media enquiries, please contact Ms Virginia Siu, Communications Manager of the HKAGE (Phone: 3940 0114 / Email: virginiasiu@hkage.org.hk).

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