Coronavirus: Singapore

Only 10-15% of cases likely to need care in hospital once things stabilise

Cheryl Tan and Clara Chong

Only 10 per cent to 15 per cent of Covid-19 patients in Singapore are expected to need hospital care when the current increase in cases has stabilised.

Meanwhile, over 50 per cent of patients will likely recover safely at home, said Prof Kenneth Mak, director of medical services, Singapore General Hospital.

"We have some facilities (and are) trying to expand some capabilities and so I think over the next month, we will see some shifts, some transitions in terms of the proportions of people in the hospital versus the CCF," he said.

The home recovery scheme will allow fully vaccinated patients aged between 22 and 69 to recover safely at home so that hospital resources can be deployed to those who need more intensive care.

"They must not have severe illnesses and should not live with household members who are above 60 or are vulnerable," he added.

One group of patients that will mostly be cared for in the stepped-up CCFs are nursing home residents with Covid-19, said Prof Mak.

They tend to be frail and have multiple other medical problems.

For the majority of patients who are vaccinated and have mild or no symptoms, home recovery will be the default route to recovery.

"We are beginning to, in a way, in a spectrum of recovery options to suit different Covid-19 patients' needs in order for there to be good recovery outcomes without overtaxing Singapore's medical system," said Prof Mak.

For instance, patients with certain risk factors and who require monitoring to ensure that they do not deteriorate but who are assessed to not need a hospital bed will be placed in enhanced or stepped-up CCFs.

On the other hand, those who are infected and healthy but are unable to safely isolate at home will be cared for in the current CCFs, said Prof Mak.

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"Eventually, we can match the likelihood of (viral) mutation, the course of illness, with the type of care we can provide them, so we are never going to shortchange people. We want to make sure that we also have enough resources for those who truly are critically ill, but also for the great majority who can be managed outside," he added.

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