

A Brief Word About Asymptomatic Infections

The Annals of Internal Medicine is an extremely prestigious journal. There was a recent interesting article [Prevalence of Asymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 Infection](#). It's a relatively easy read. If, however, you don't want to read it, here are some key points.

- Asymptomatic persons seem to account for approximately 40% to 45% of SARS-CoV-2 infections, and they can transmit the virus to others for an extended period, perhaps longer than 14 days.
- In some cases, the viral load of such asymptomatic persons has been equal to that of symptomatic persons, suggesting similar potential for viral transmission.
- The absence of COVID-19 symptoms in persons infected with SARS-CoV-2 might not necessarily imply an absence of harm.
- Asymptomatic infection may be associated with subclinical lung abnormalities, as detected by computed tomography.
- Because of the high risk for silent spread by asymptomatic persons, it is imperative that testing programs include those without symptoms.

- 54% of asymptomatic but infected people on the *Diamond Princes* cruise ship who received CT scans of their chest showed lung lesions.
- The relatively high proportion (60.5%) of asymptomatic cases on the *U.S.S. Theodore Roosevelt*—whose crew members, presumably, are mostly in their 20s and 30s—might suggest that asymptomatic infection is more likely in younger persons?
- The authors indicate the data and studies reviewed are imperfect in many ways. The ideal study of asymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 infection has yet to be done.

My two cents. Many people ask me if they should get antibody testing. This article indicates a reason why you should. If you test positive for SARS-CoV-2 antibodies, then you have had Covid-19 and you were either symptomatic or asymptomatic. Either way I'd press your doctor to order a CT scan of your chest to look for damage. If she/he says no provide this paper and say "54% of asymptomatic but infected people on the *Diamond Princes* cruise ship who received CT scans of their chest showed lung lesions."