# Transmission of Viruses in Droplets and Aerosols

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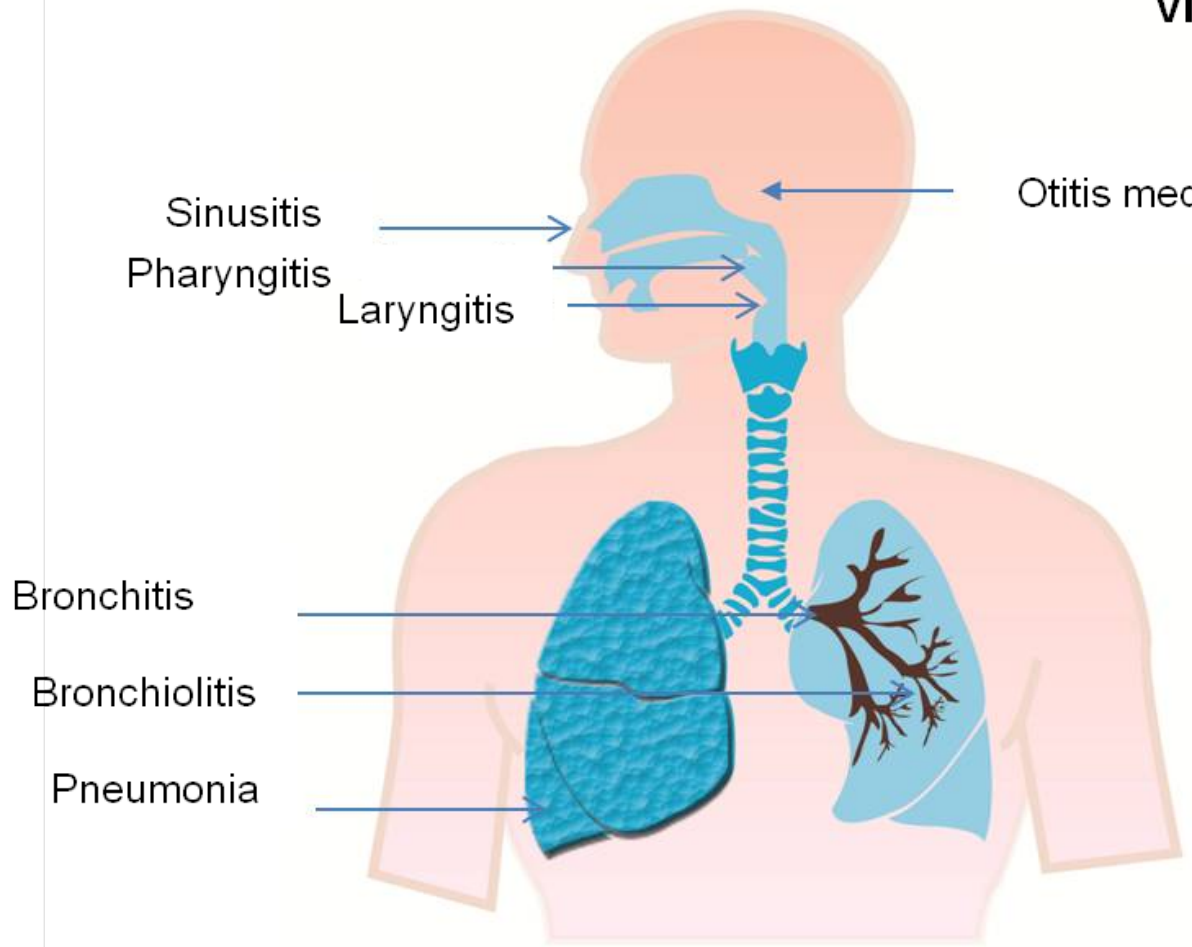
# Topics

1. Respiratory viruses
2. Transmission modes
3. Size distributions and evaporation
4. Virus aerosol dynamics
5. Impact of humidity
6. SARS-CoV-2



https://phil.cdc.gov/Details.aspx?pid=11160




## Viruses that infect the upper respiratory tract

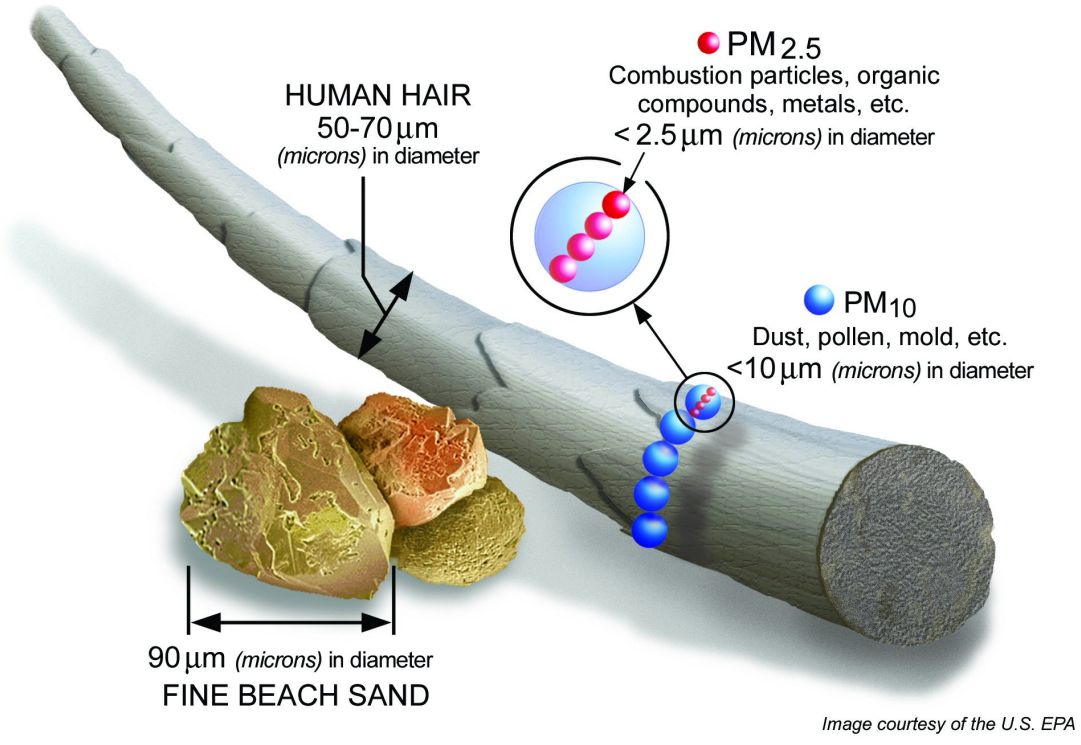
Rhinovirus
Coronavirus
Influenza virus
Parainfluenza virus
Respiratory Syncytial virus
Herpesvirus
Adenovirus
Bocavirus
Coxsackivirus

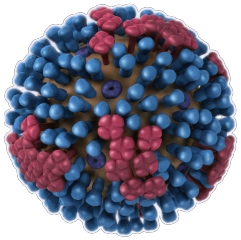
## Viruses that infect the lower respiratory tract

Influenza virus
Parainfluenza virus
Respiratory Syncytial virus
Adenovirus
Bocavirus
Metapneumovirus

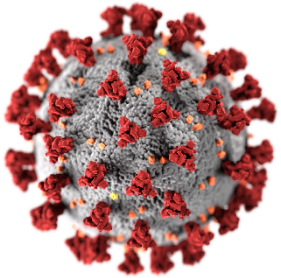

https://www.intechopen.com/books/respiratory-disease-and-infection-a-new-insight/pathogenesis-of-viral-respiratory-infection

# Virus Size

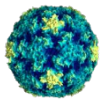


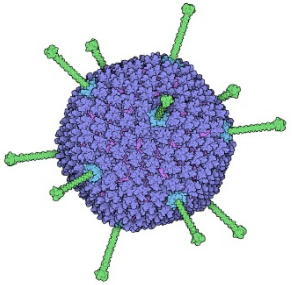
influenza
0.1 µm



SARS-CoV-2
0.12 µm



rhinovirus
0.03 µm



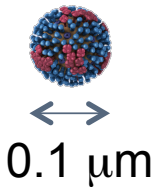
adenovirus
0.1 µm

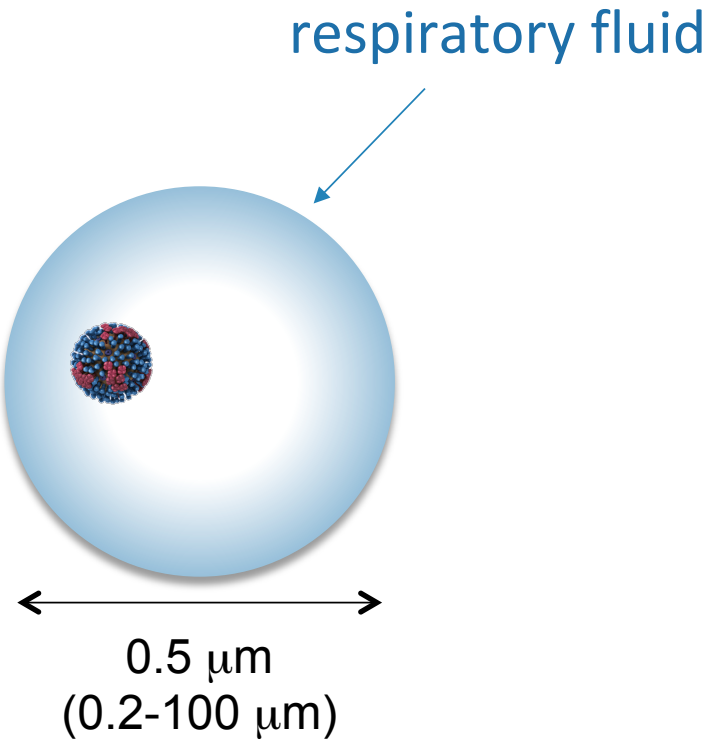
https://www.cdc.gov/flu/resource-center/freeresources/graphics/images.htm, http://2020visionsdesignedforhealthcare.com/rhinovirus, https://phil.cdc.gov/Details.aspx?pid=23312, https://pdb101.rcsb.org/motm/132

Lindsey Apar, Virginia Tech, March 2020

# Size Matters

- Airborne virus is not naked!




- Size determines
  - Lifetime in the atmosphere
  - Where it deposits in the respiratory system

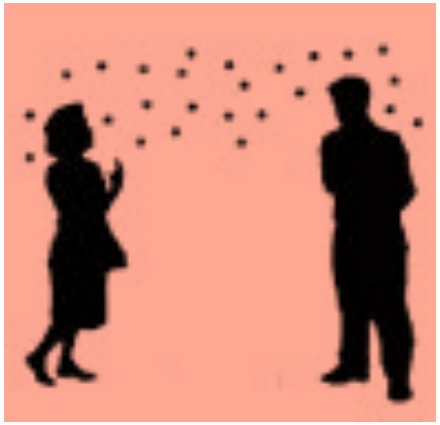
# Modes of Transmission

direct contact

indirect contact

Defined by medical community as >5 μm and happening at close-range only (<2 m)

large droplets



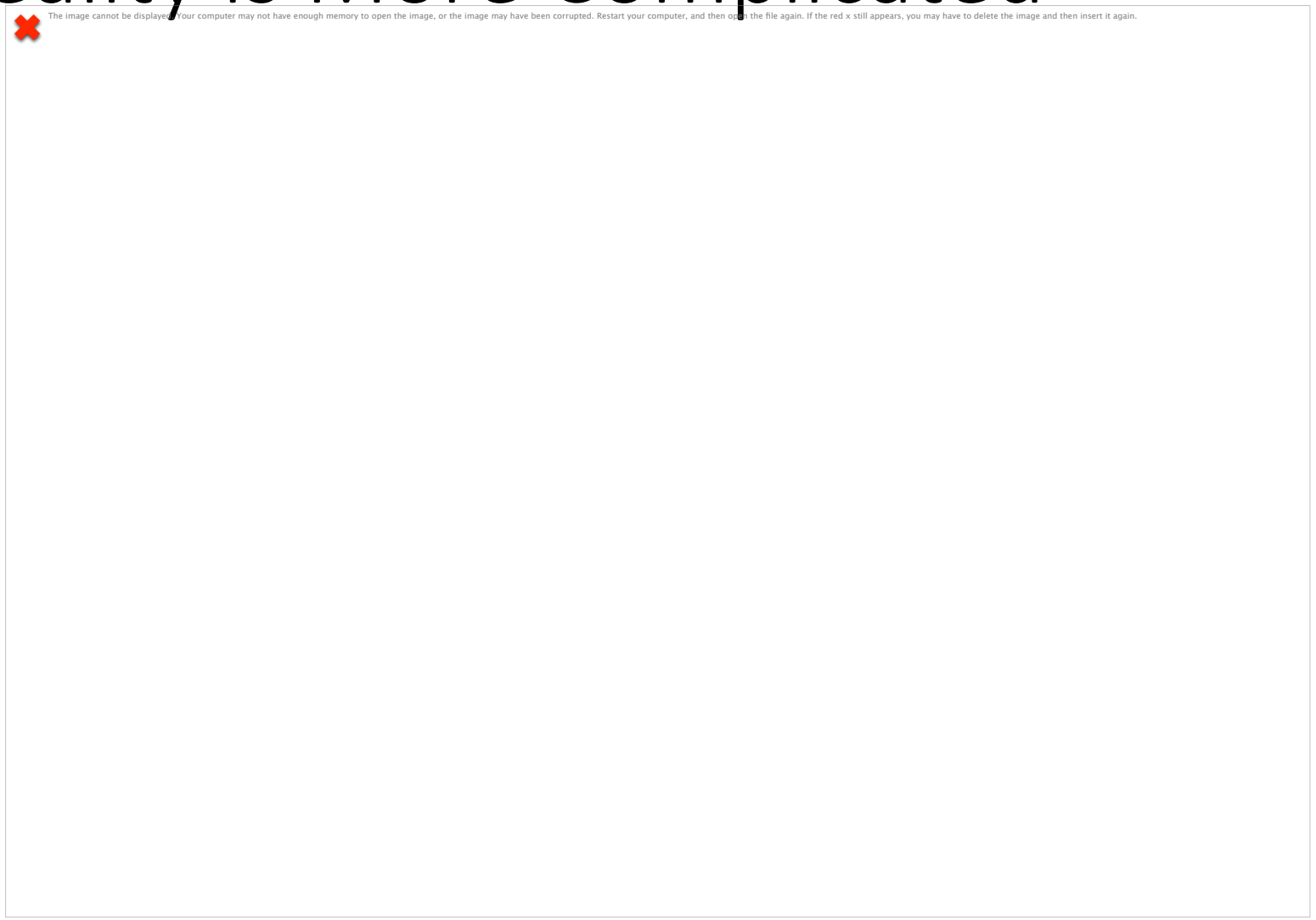
aerosols

Defined by medical community as <5 μm and happening at long-range only (>2 m)



http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cpip-pclcpi/annf/v2-eng.php

# Reality is More Complicated





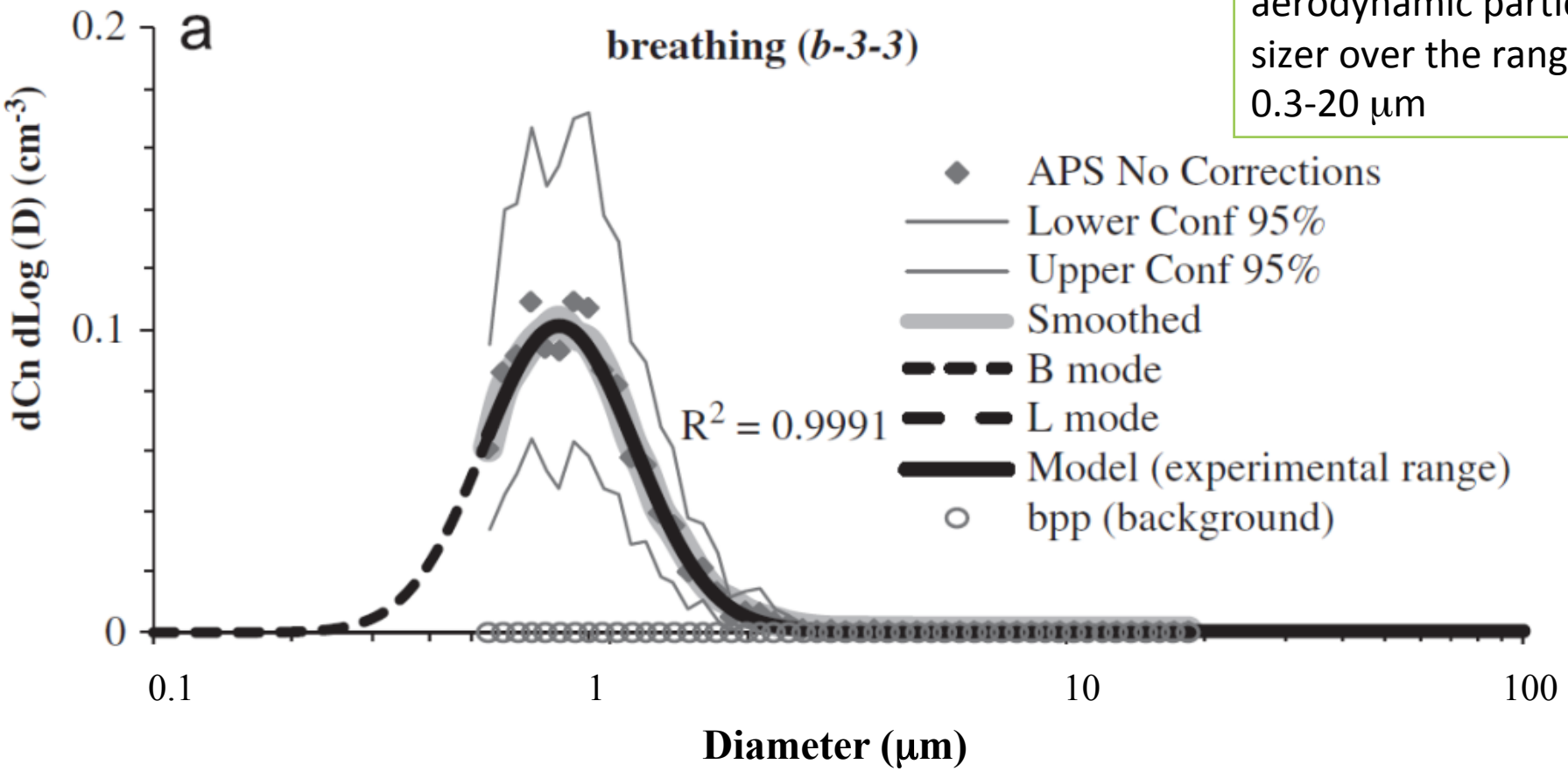

Tellier et al., 2019, *BMC Infect. Dis*, https://bmcinfectdis.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12879-019-3707-y

Droplets that are expelled into air can be inhaled, land on people's mucus membranes, or deposit onto surfaces, where someone can touch them or they can be resuspended into air.

What size are these droplets?

# Size Distributions: Breathing

Measured by aerodynamic particle sizer over the range 0.3-20 μm

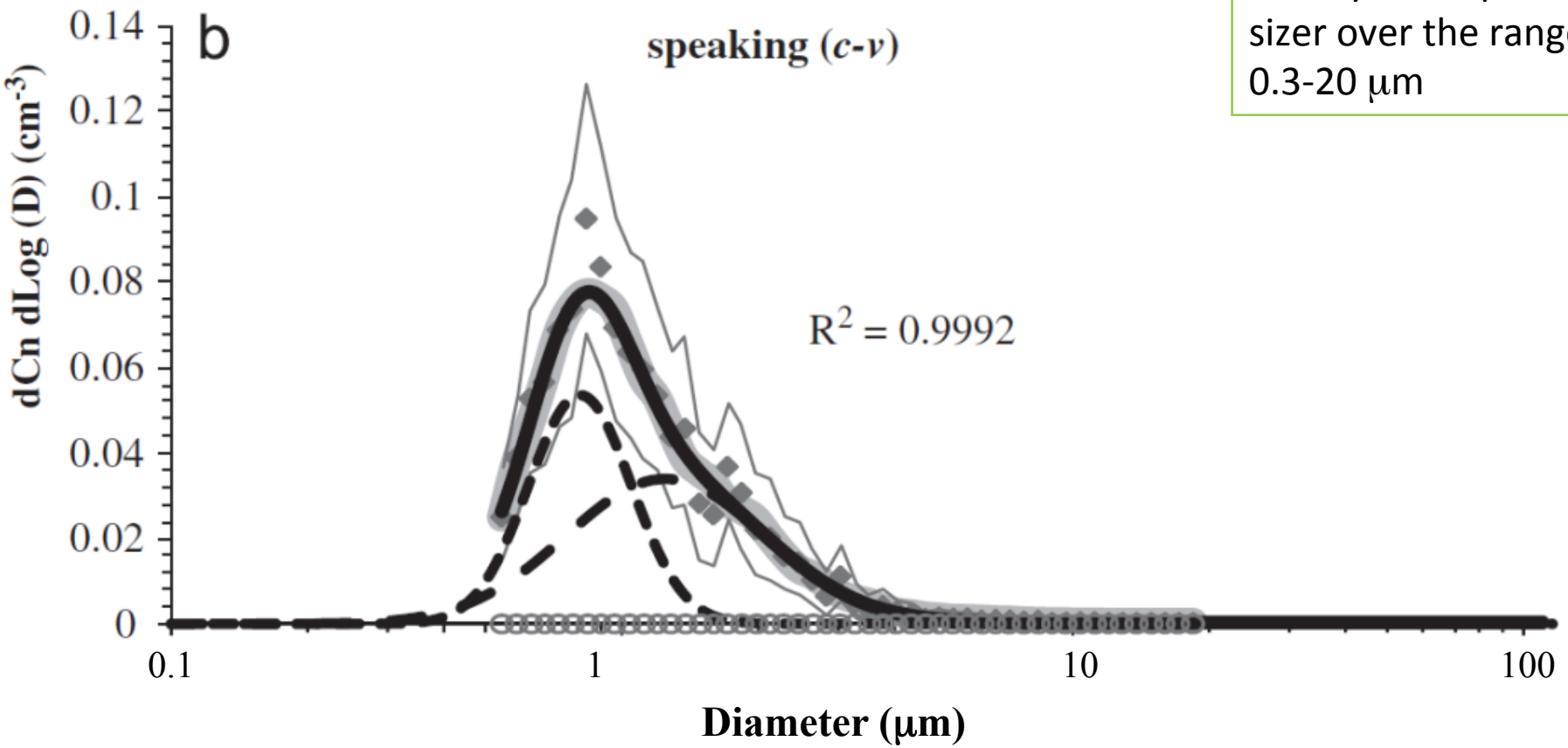





Johnson et al., 2011, *J. Aerosol Sci.*, https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0021850211001200

# Size Distributions: Speaking

Measured by aerodynamic particle sizer over the range 0.3-20 μm

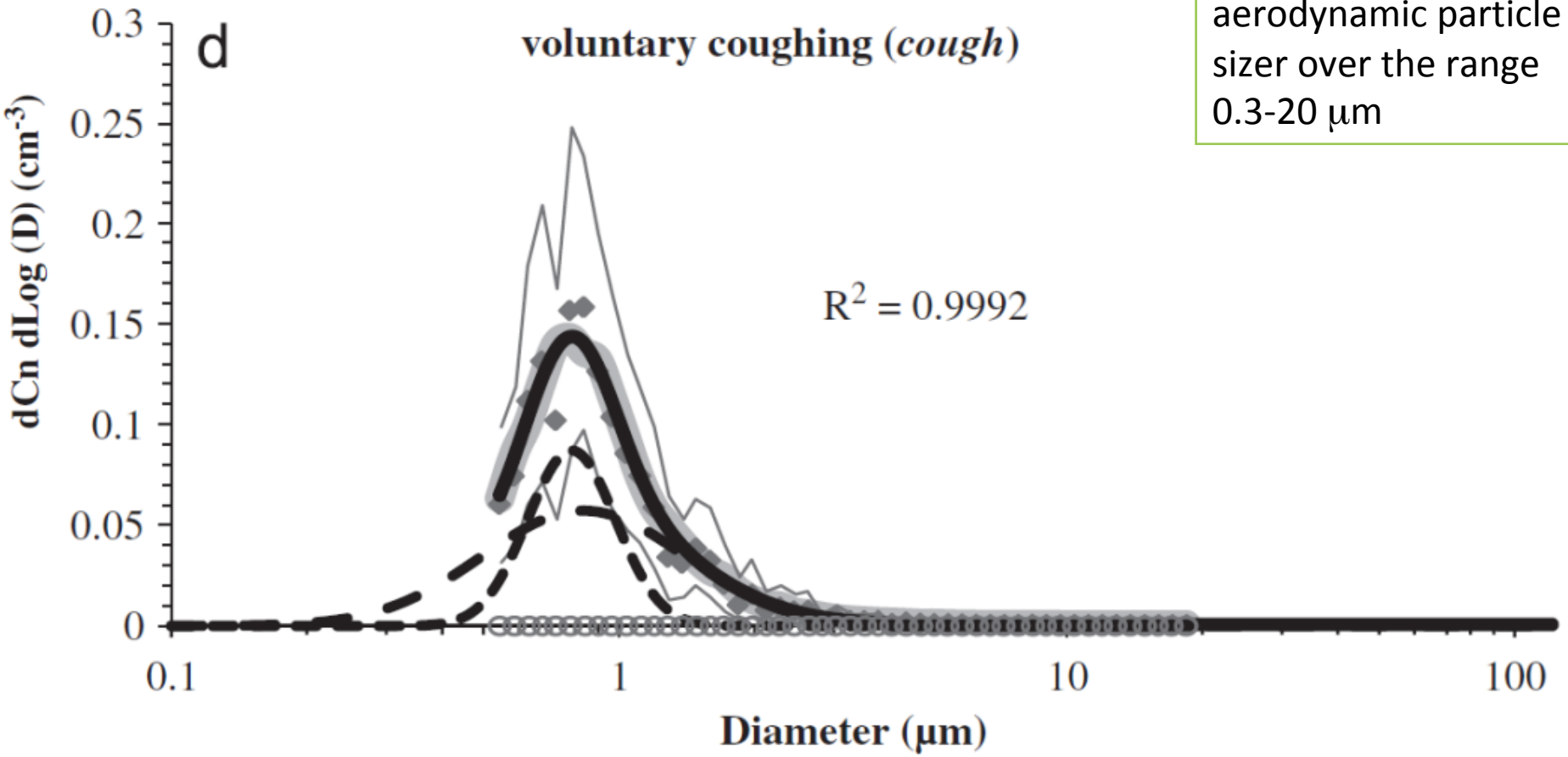





Johnson et al., 2011, *J. Aerosol Sci.*, https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0021850211001200

# Size Distributions: Coughing

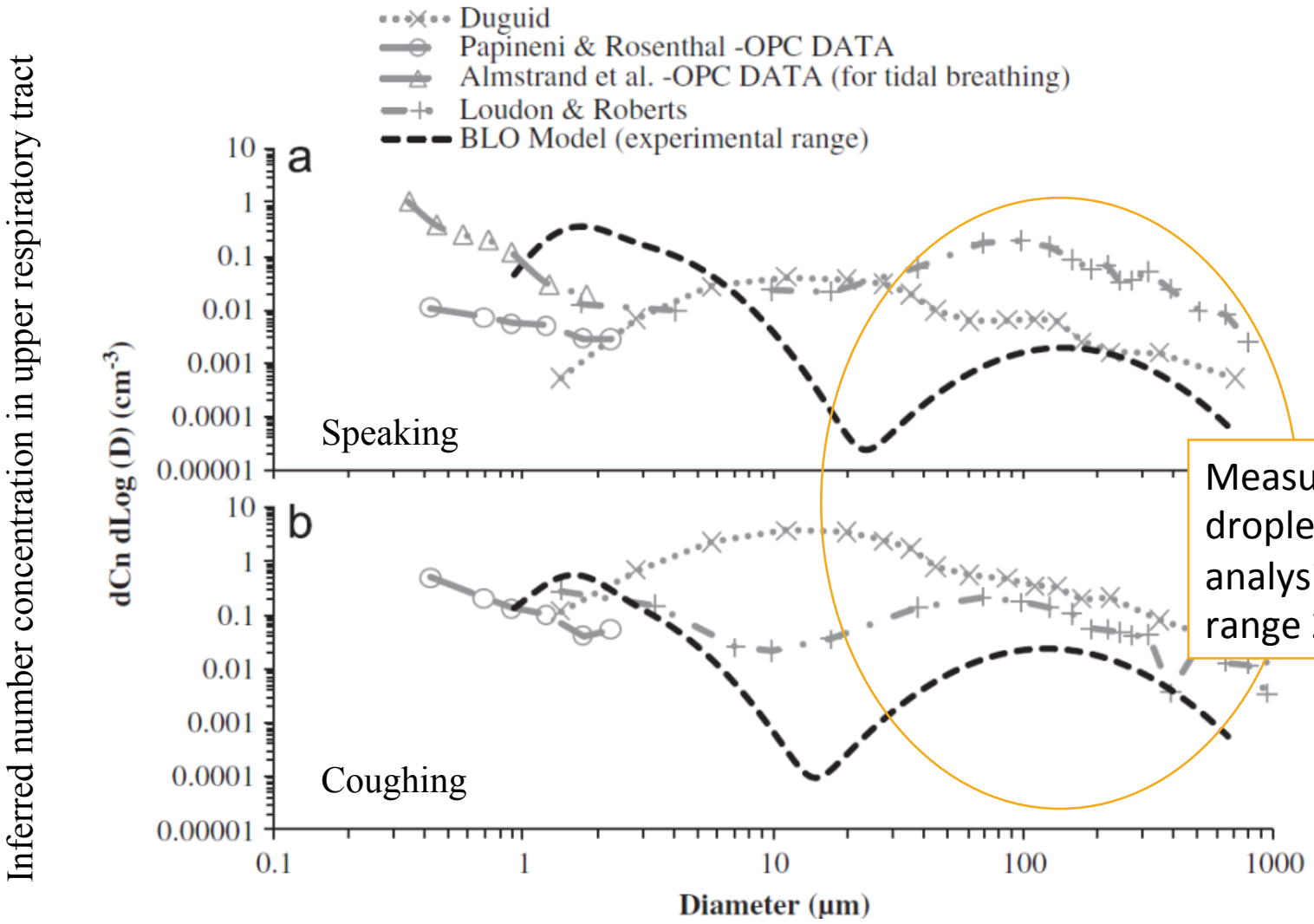
Measured by aerodynamic particle sizer over the range 0.3-20 μm






Johnson et al., 2011, *J. Aerosol Sci.*, https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0021850211001200

# Corrected Size Distributions




Measured by droplet deposition analysis over the range 20-2000 µm



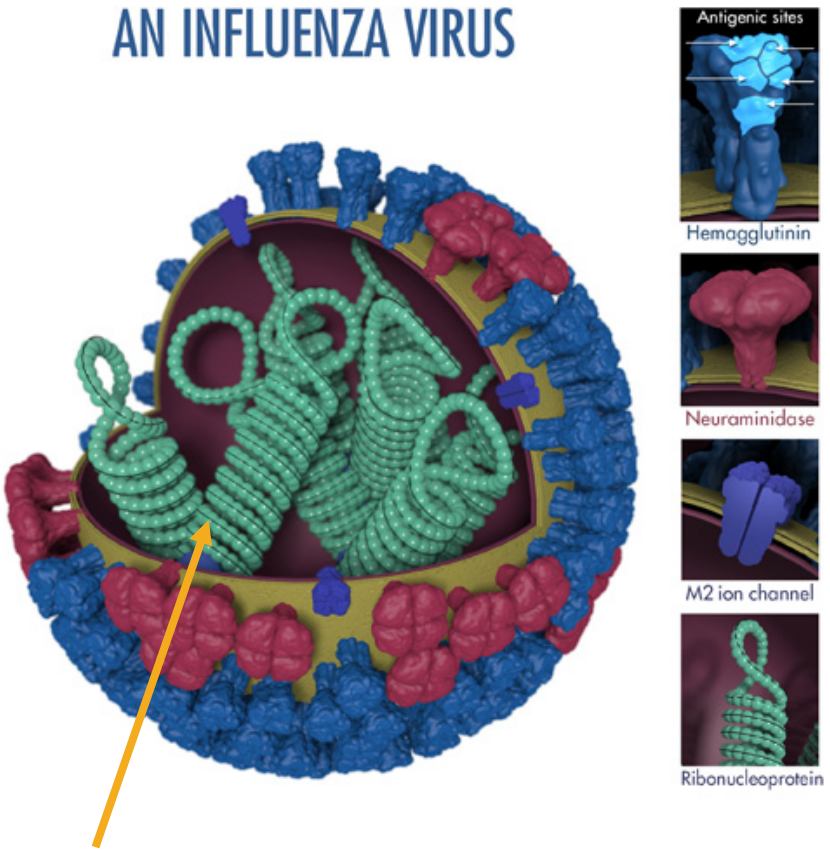
Johnson et al., 2011, *J. Aerosol Sci.*, https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0021850211001200

Breathing, talking, and coughing release droplets that range from submicron to millimeter in size.

What size droplets carry viruses?

# Virus Detection Methods

1. Total virus
   - Number of genome copies (GC) determined by molecular techniques (quantitative polymerase chain reaction, qPCR)
   - Reflects number of viruses with intact DNA or RNA
   - Does NOT indicate whether virus is infectious or not

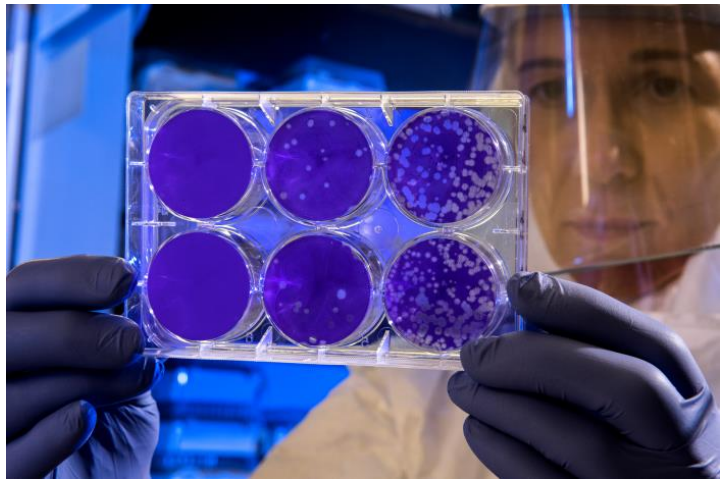




https://www.cdc.gov/flu/resource-center/freeresources/graphics/images.htm

# Virus Detection Methods

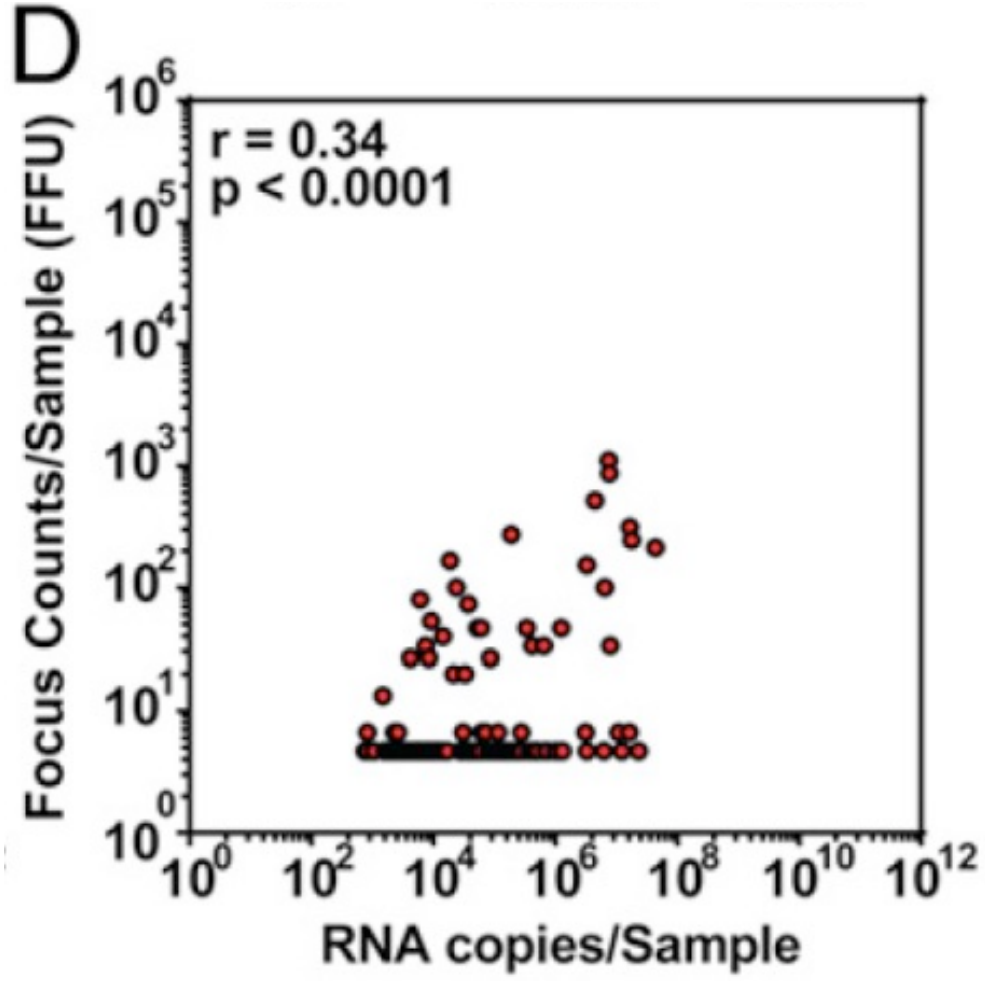
2. Infectious virus
   - Number of viruses that are able to infect cells determined by culture (growing)
   - PFU = plaque forming units, number of viruses capable of forming plaques on host cells, focus forming units (FFU) are related
   - $TCID_{50}$ = median tissue culture infectious dose, concentration at which half of cells are infected after being exposed to the sample





https://phil.cdc.gov/Details.aspx?pid=23213

# Relationship Between the Two Methods for Flu Virus




There is a weak, but significant, correlation between virus RNA copies and infectious virus.



Yan et al., 2018, *PNAS*, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29348203

# Amount of Flu Virus in Coarse vs. Fine Droplets (Particles) in Exhaled Breath

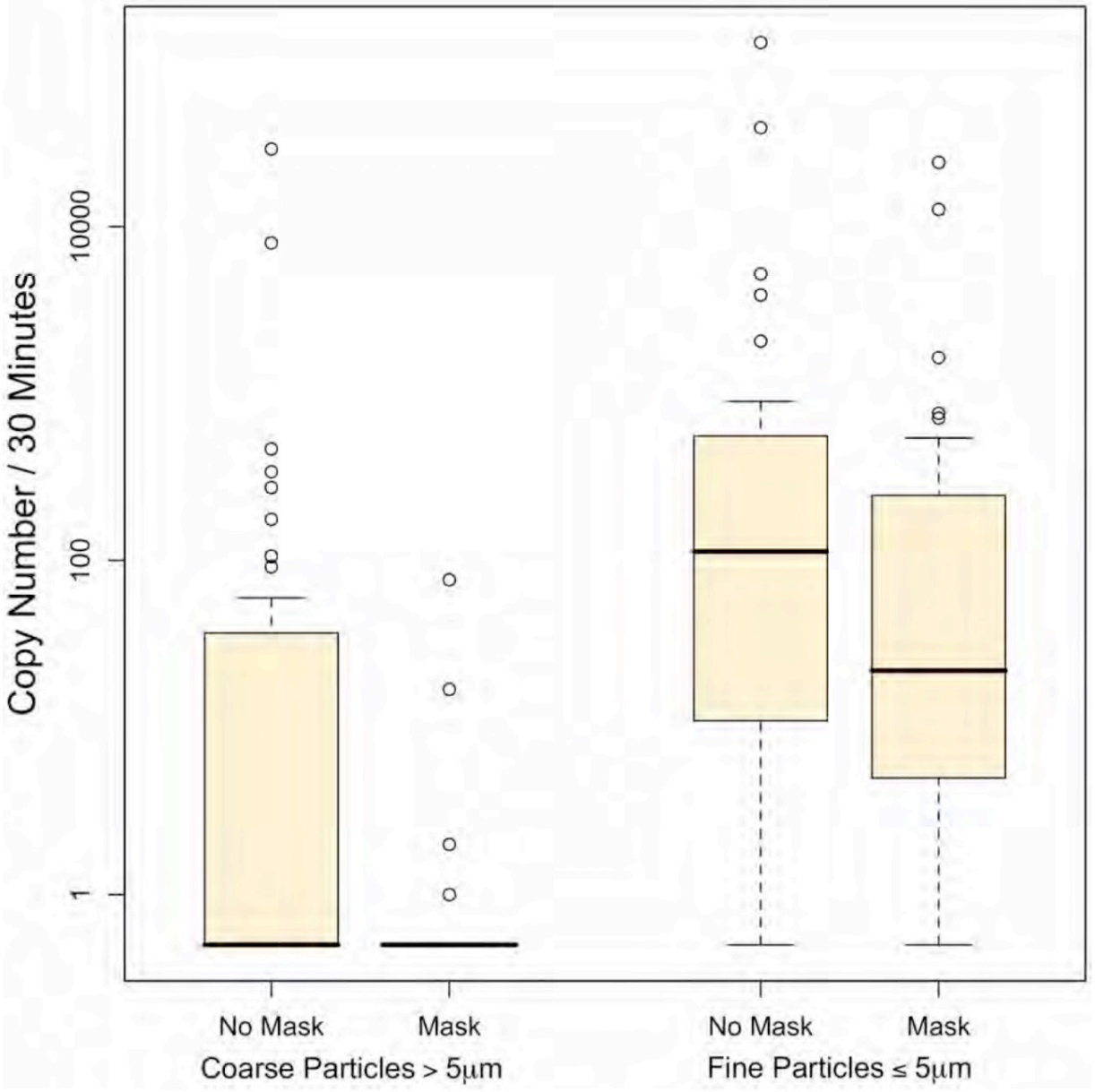
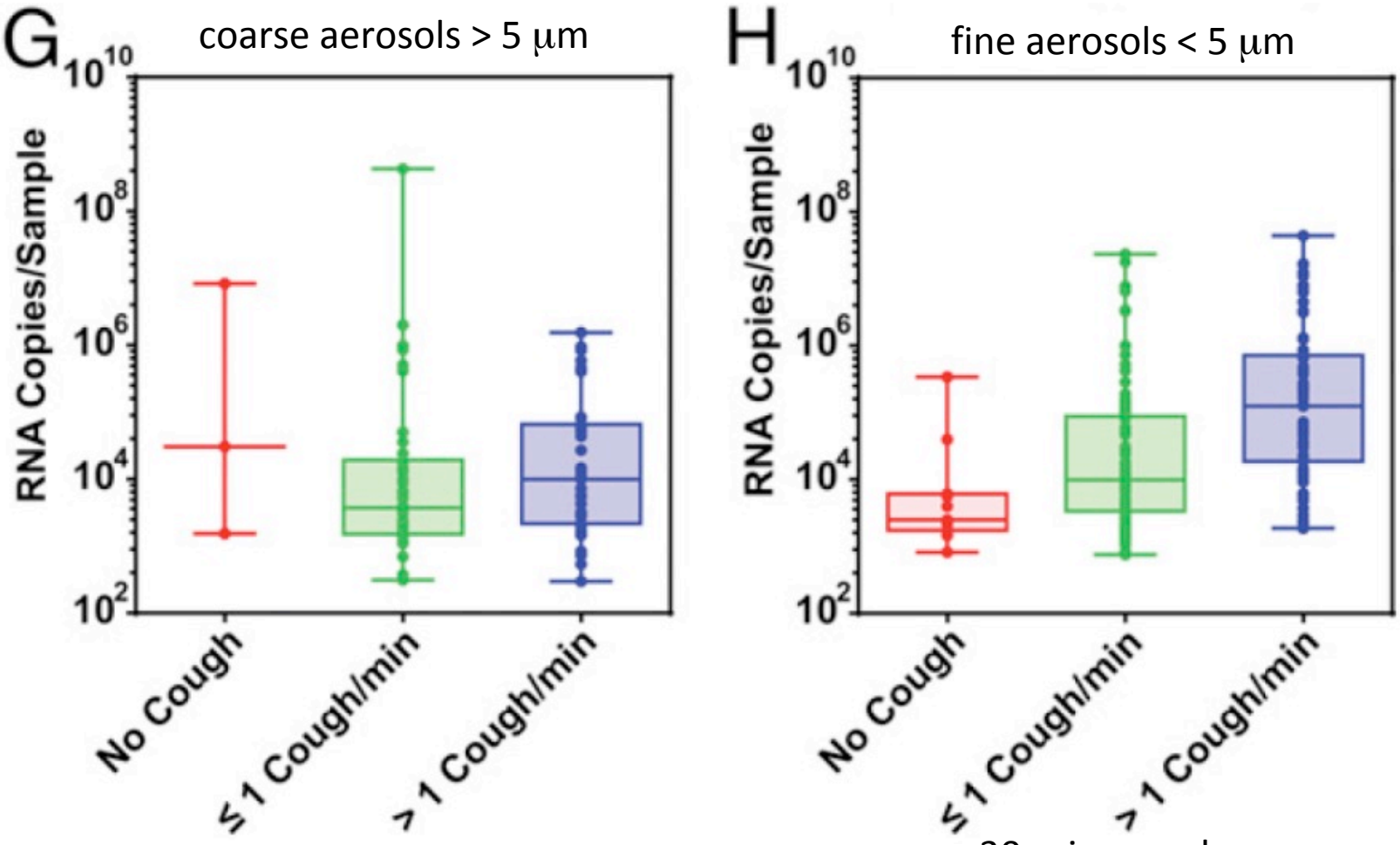



**Figure 1. Influenza virus copy number in aerosol particles exhaled by patients with and without wearing of an ear-loop surgical mask.** Counts below the limit of detection are represented as 0.5 on the log scale.
doi:10.1371/journal.ppat.1003205.g001



Milton et al., 2013, *PLoS Pathogens*, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23505369

# Flu Virus in Droplets (Aerosols)




30-min sample
recite alphabet at 5, 15, 25 min

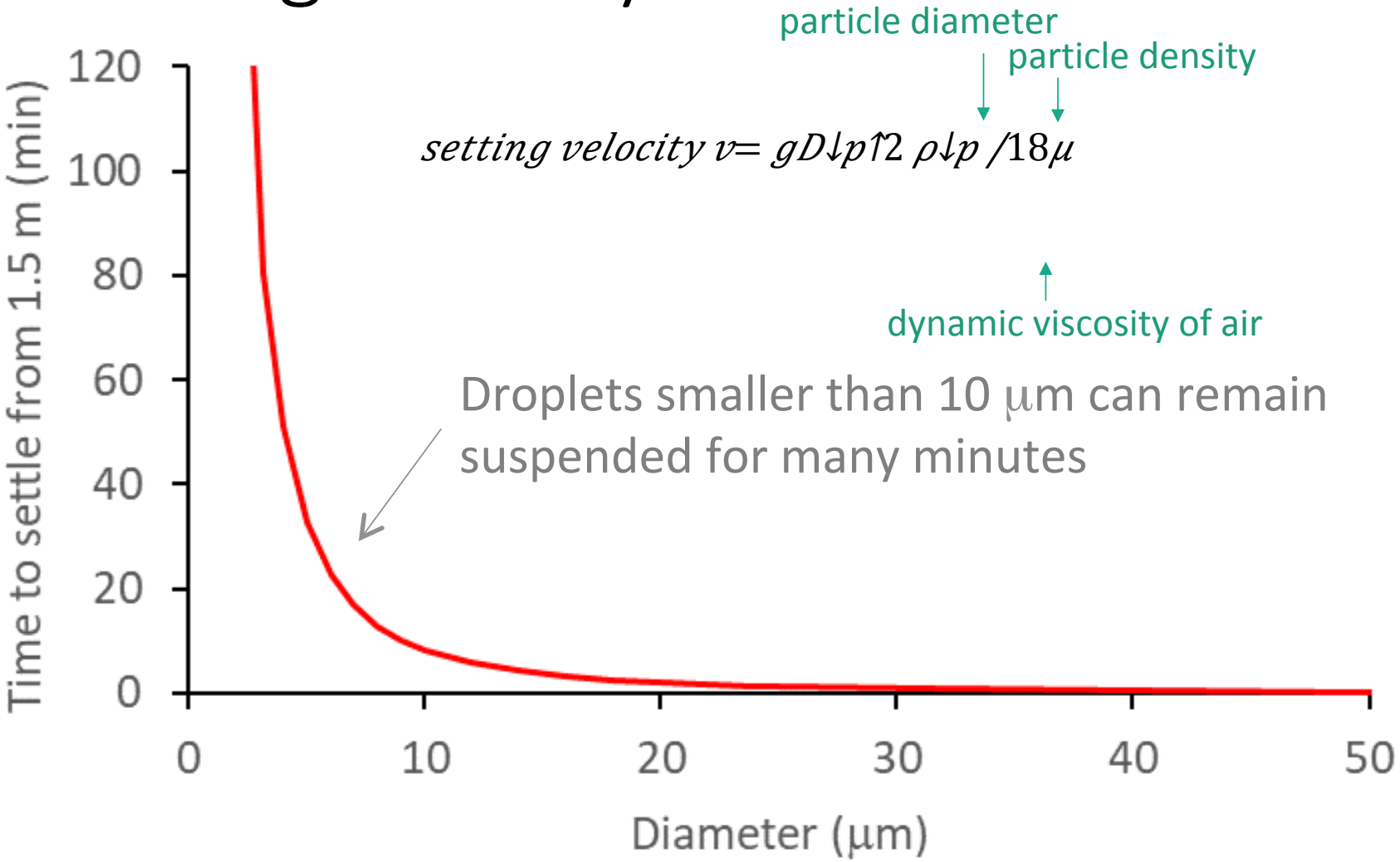


Yan et al., 2018, *PNAS*, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29348203

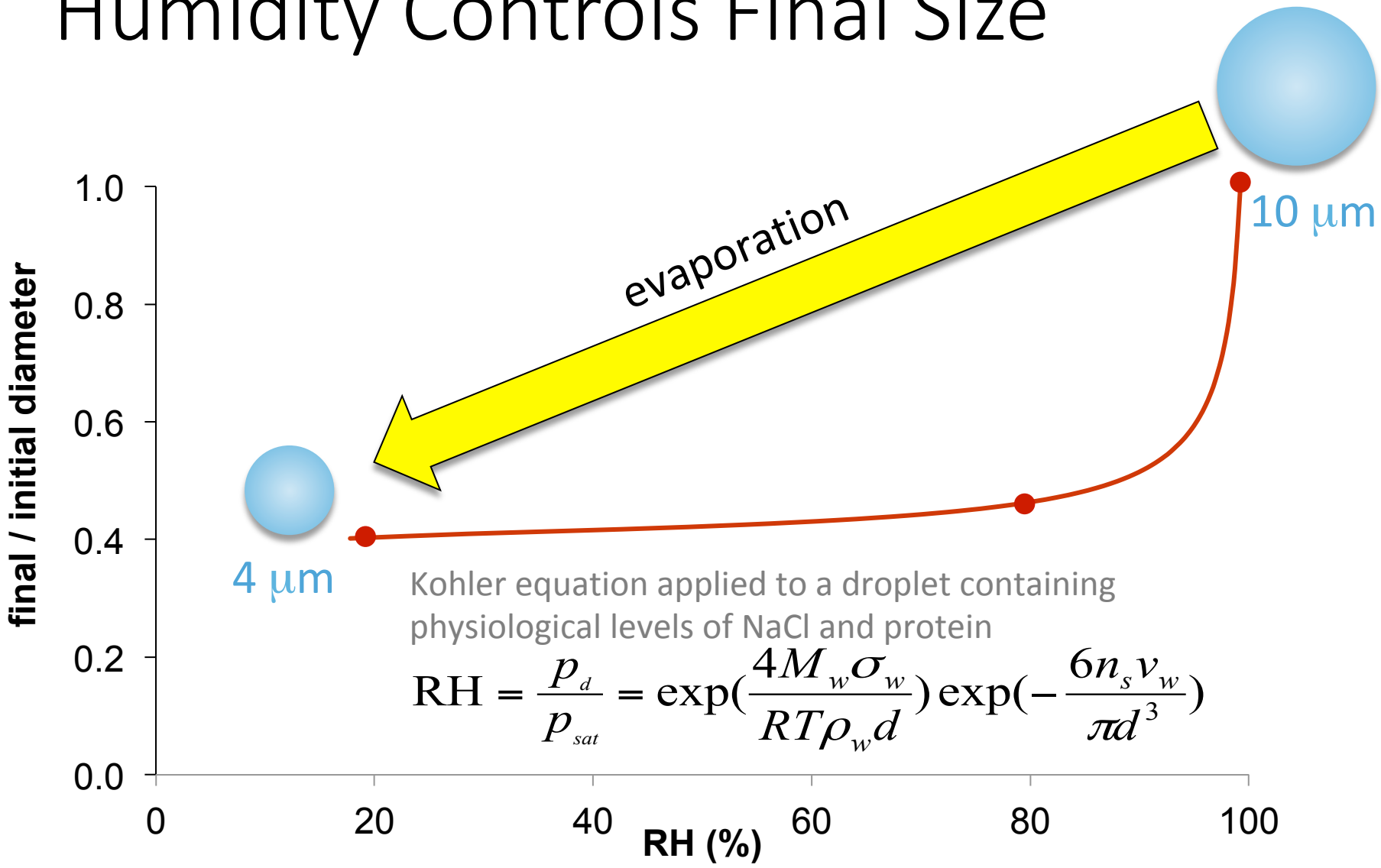
The majority of flu virus (RNA copies) is found in fine (<5 μm), rather than coarse (>5 μm), droplets/aerosols.

How do these droplets move around the indoor environment?

# Settling Velocity and Time



# Humidity Controls Final Size



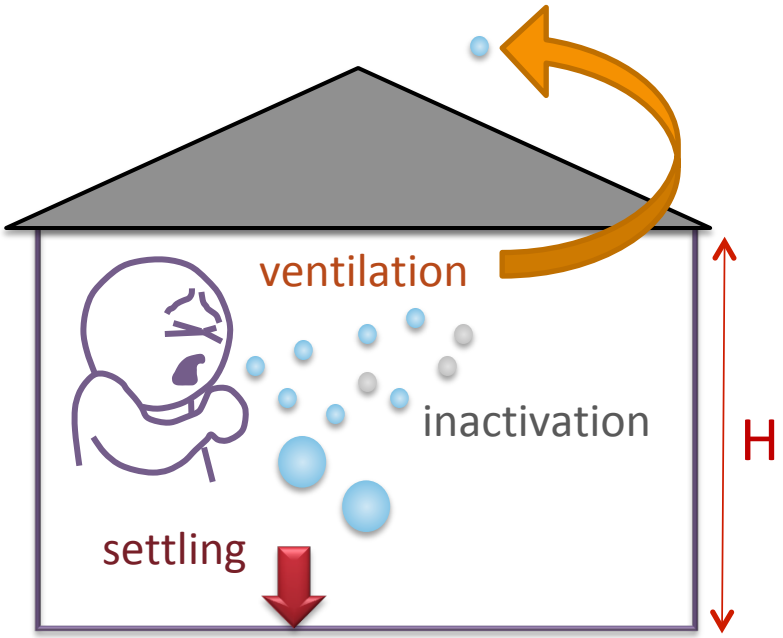

Kohler equation applied to a droplet containing physiological levels of NaCl and protein

$$\mathrm{RH} = \frac{p_d}{p_{sat}} = \exp\left(\frac{4M_w\sigma_w}{RT\rho_w d}\right)\exp\left(-\frac{6n_s v_w}{\pi d^3}\right)$$



Mikhailov, 2004, *Atmos. Chem. Phys.*, https://www.atmos-chem-phys.net/4/323/2004/

# Virus Dynamics in Indoor Air




$$\frac{dC_d}{dt} = -\left(\frac{v}{H} + \lambda + k\right)C_d$$

settling

ventilation (air-exchange)

inactivation

$C_d$: concentration of infectious virus in aerosols of diameter *d*

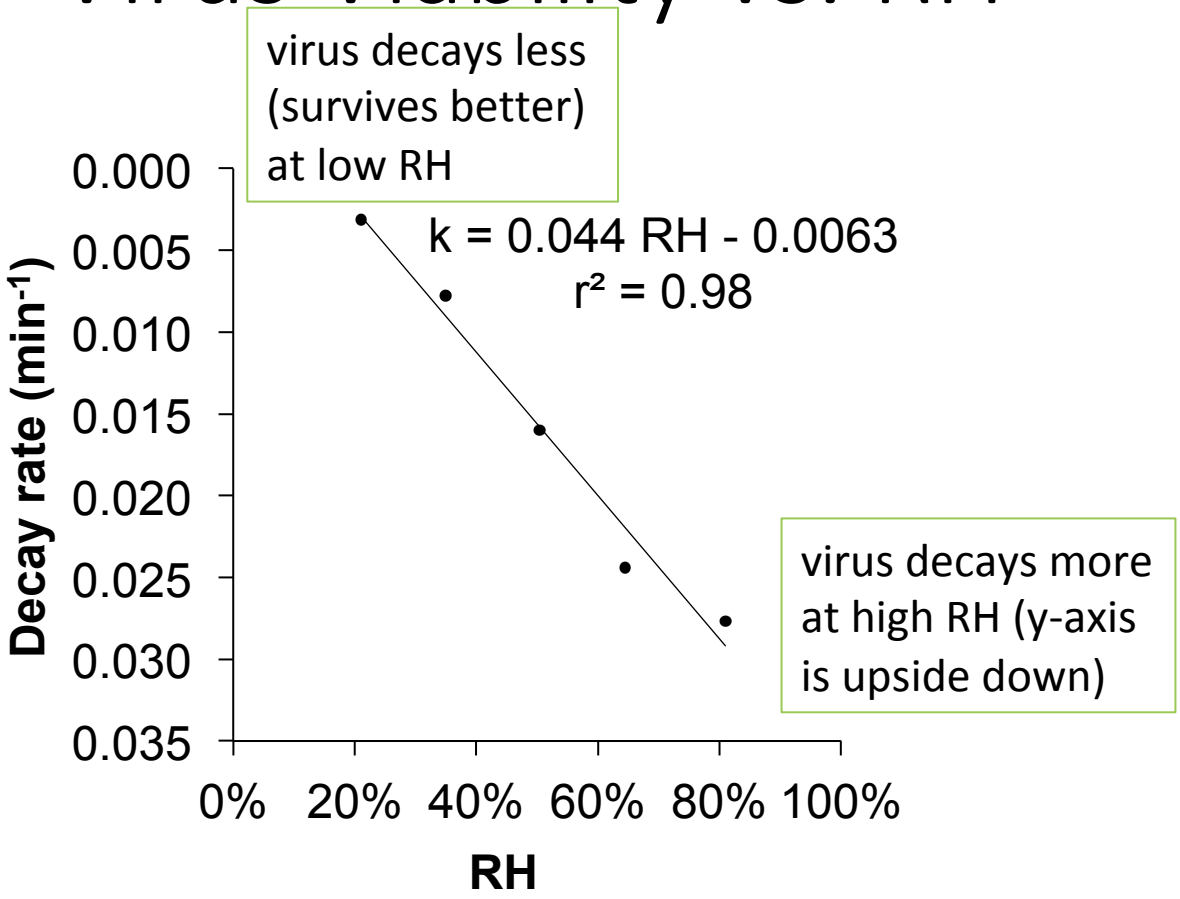
- Settling velocity *v* depends on diameter *d*
- Diameter depends on RH
- Inactivation rate *k* depends on RH


relative humidity (RH)



Yang and Marr, 2011, *PLoS One*, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3123350/

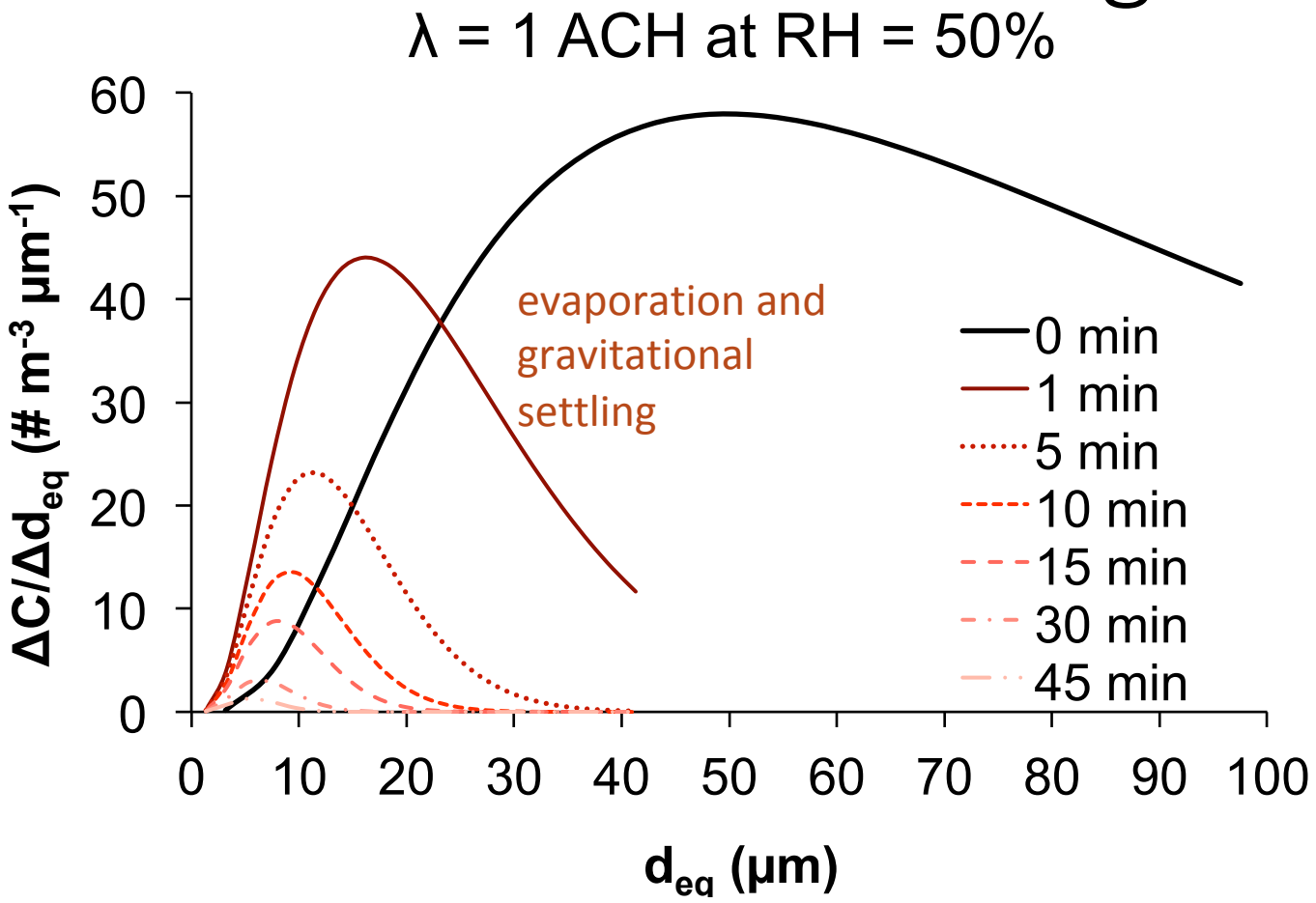
# Virus Viability vs. RH






Yang and Marr, 2011, *PLoS One*, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3123350/

# Virus-Aerosols From a Cough

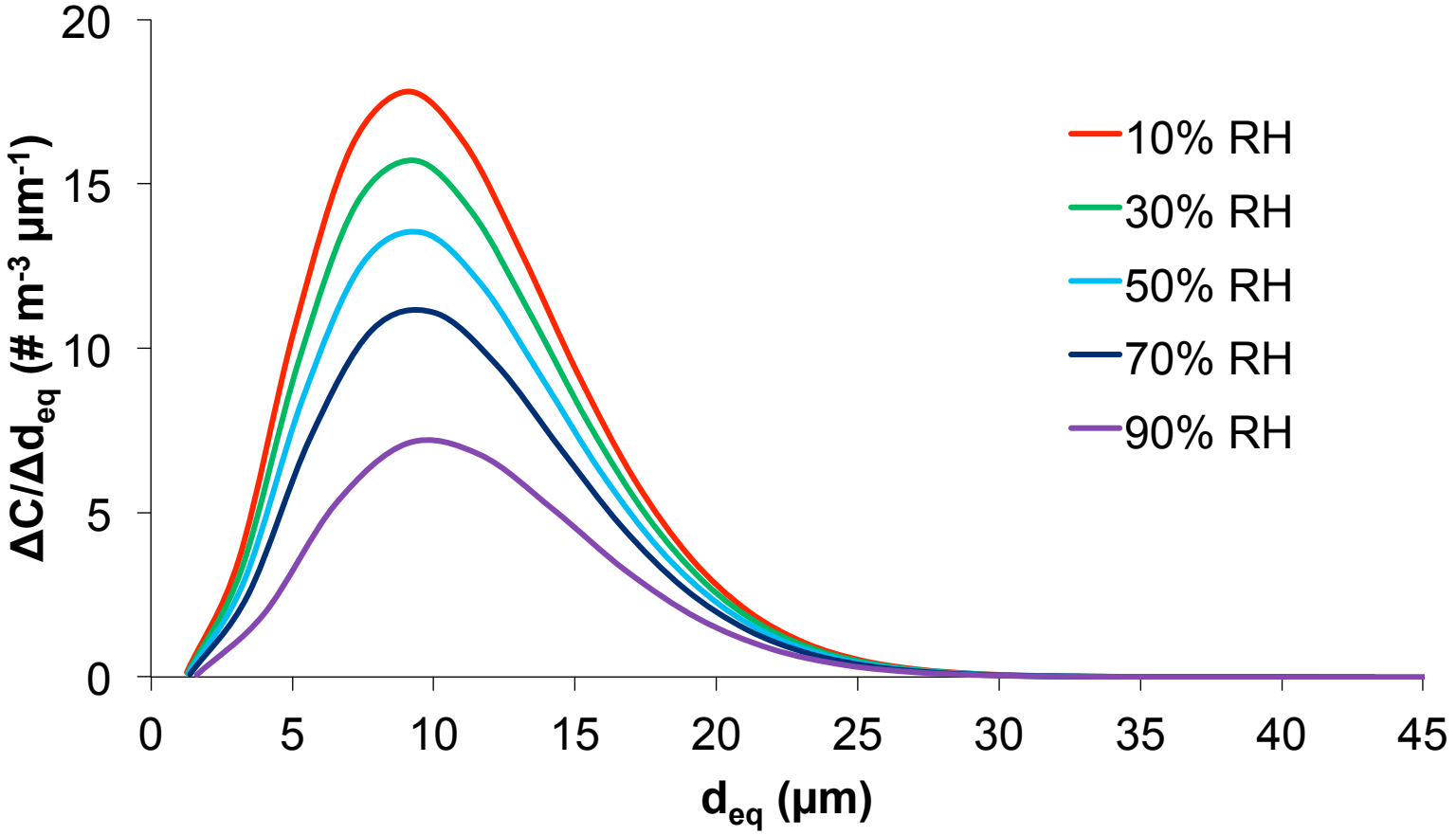



There is a size shift due to loss of larger droplets by gravitational settling.



Yang and Marr, 2011, *PLoS One*, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3123350/

# Infectious Concentrations vs. RH



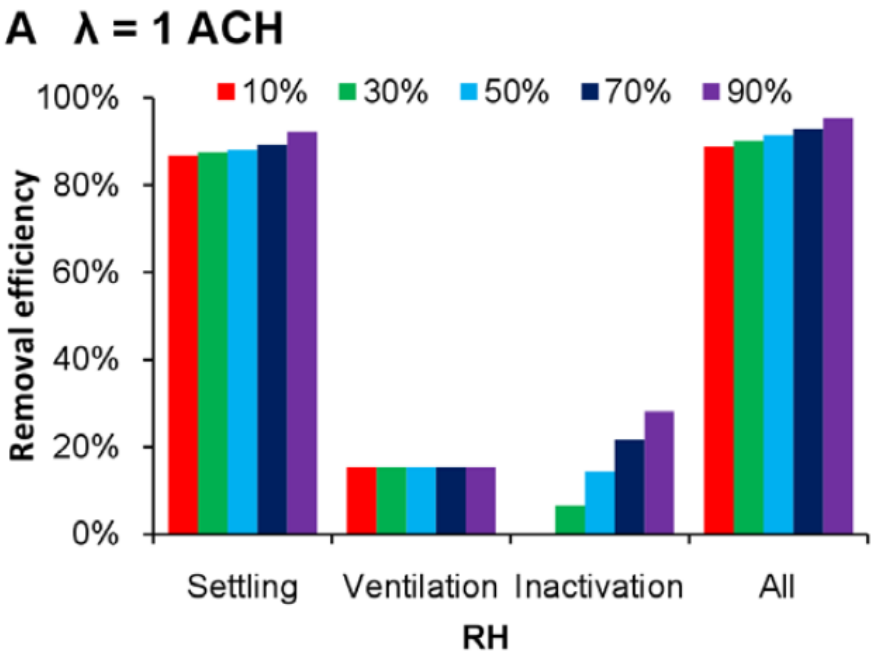

Concentrations are higher at lower RH mainly because lab-determined inactivation rate is lower.

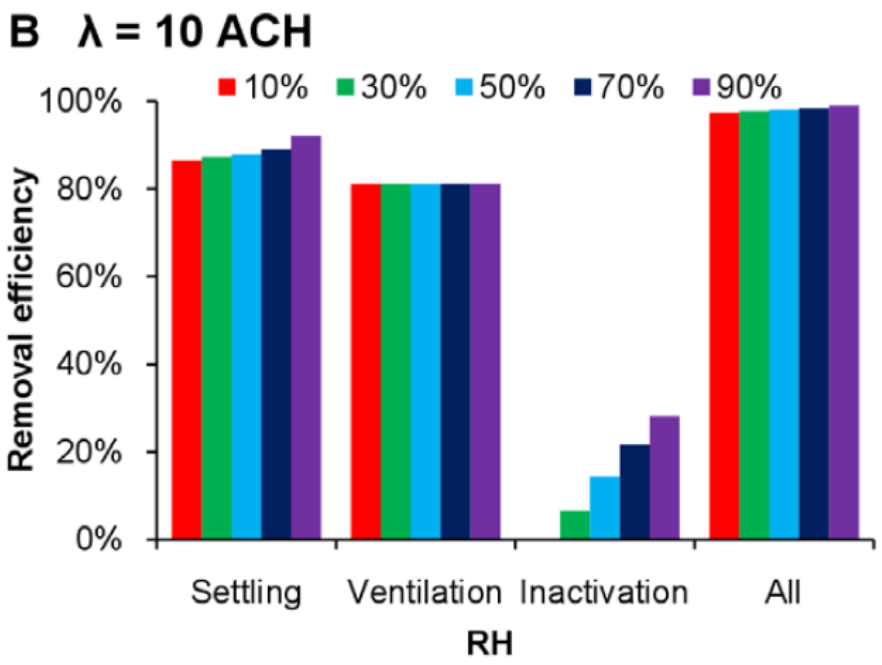


Yang and Marr, 2011, *PLoS One*, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3123350/

# RH and Removal Mechanisms

- Settling: main removal mechanism, efficient for large but not small droplets
- Ventilation: effective for all sizes, important in public places
- Inactivation: effective for all sizes, important for small droplets

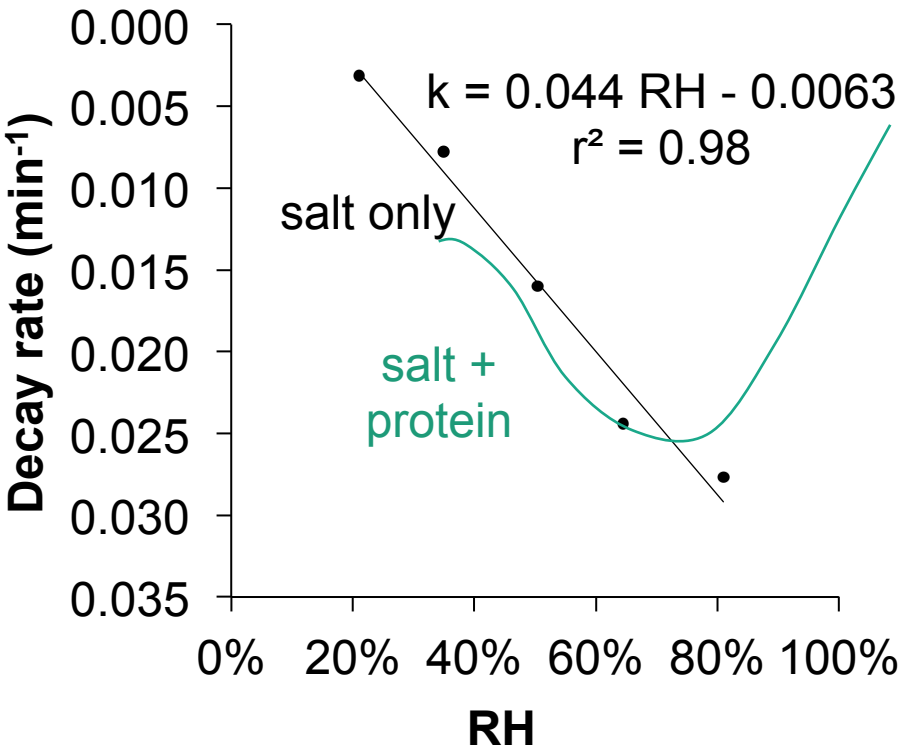





Yang and Marr, 2011, *PLoS One*, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3123350/

# Virus Viability vs. RH




Conflicting results in the literature

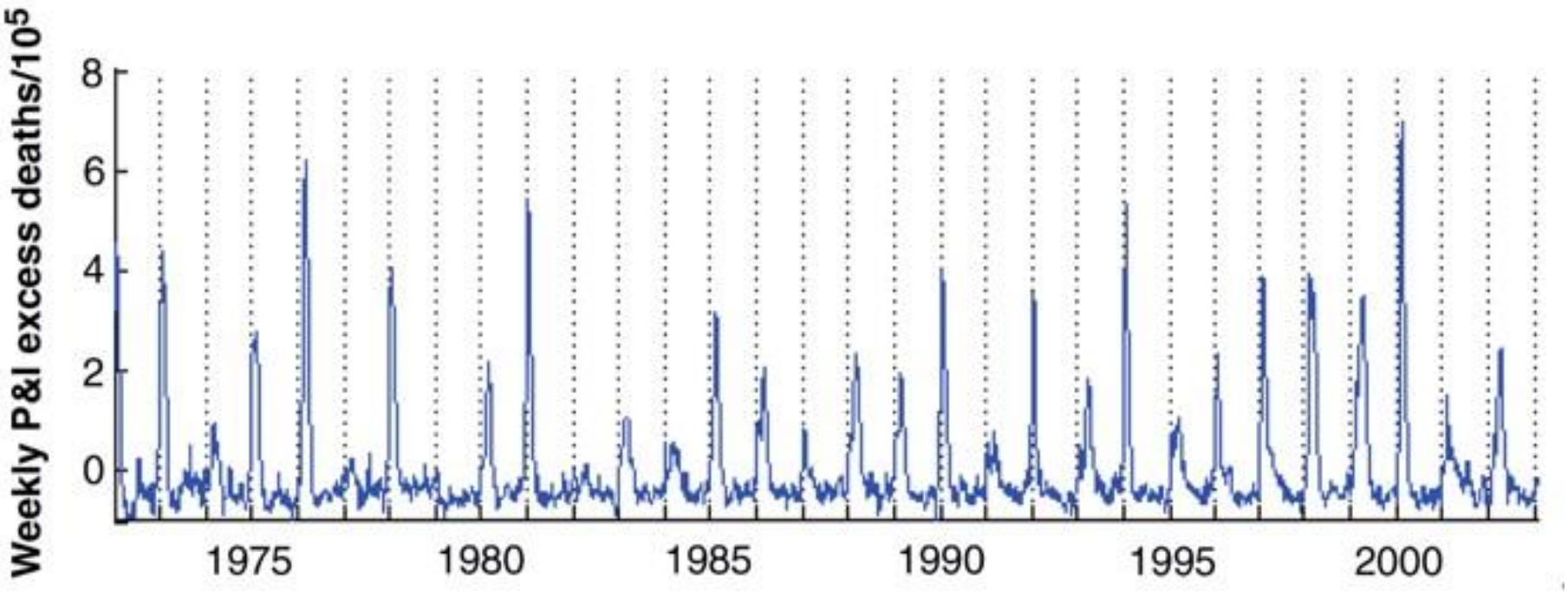


Yang and Marr, 2011, *PLoS One*, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3123350/

Viruses can be removed from indoor air by settling, ventilation, and inactivation; some of these processes are depend on humidity.

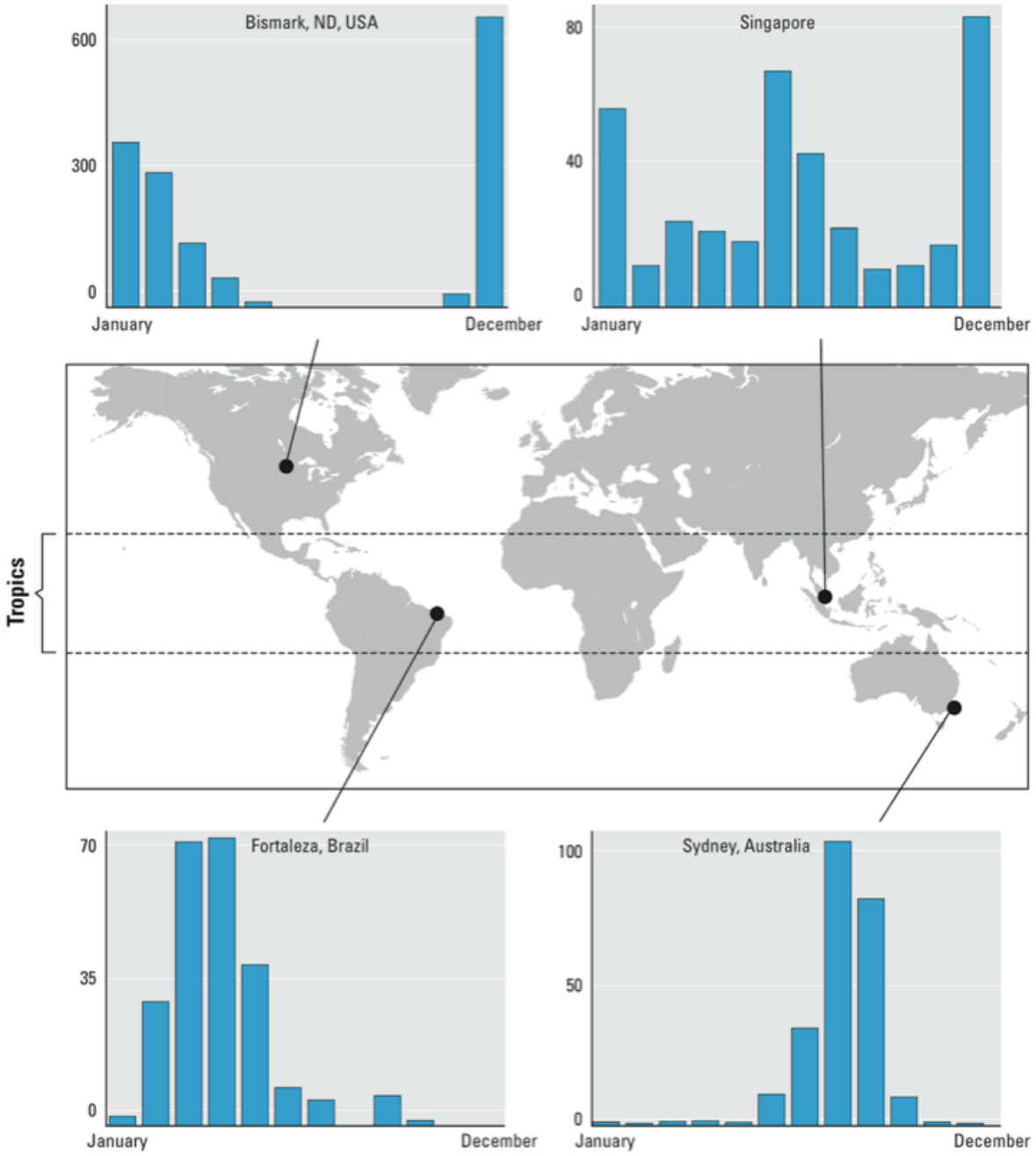
Might humidity factor into the seasonality of the flu?

# Seasonality of the Flu





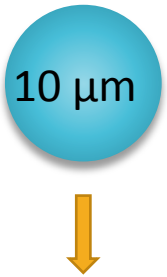
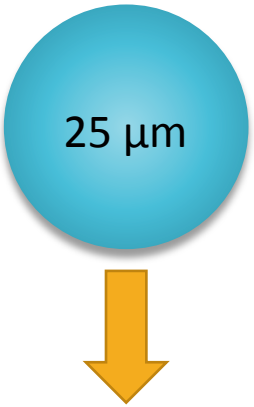
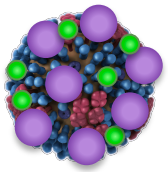
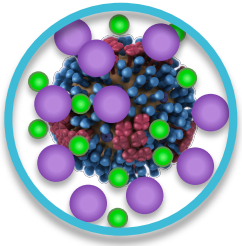
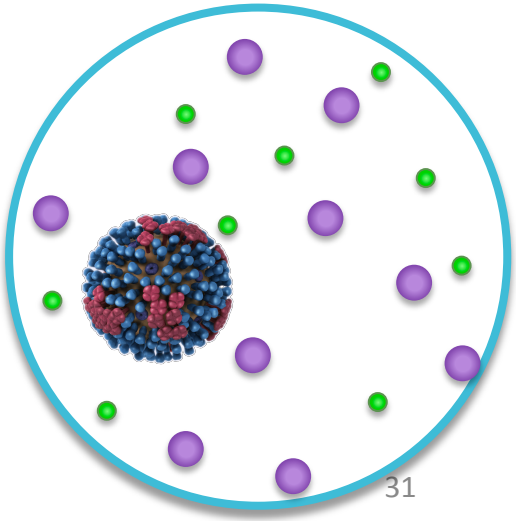

Viboud et al., 2006, *Science*, https://science.sciencemag.org/content/312/5772/447






Tamerius et al., 2011, *EHP*, https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/doi/10.1289/ehp.1002383

# How Might RH Affect Transmission?

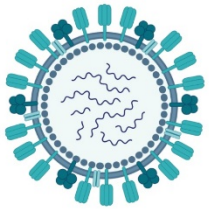
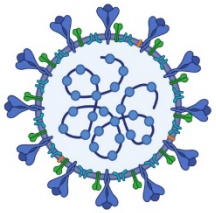
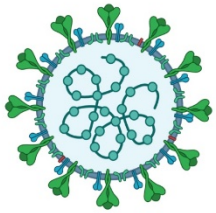
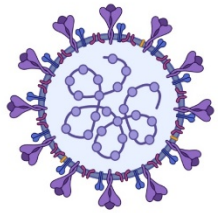
| | Low RH | Medium RH | Very high RH |
|---|---|---|---|
| Physics |   | settles in 8 min |   | settles in 1 min |
| Chemistry |  |  |  |

# Does RH Contribute to Seasonality?

| Low RH | Medium RH | Very high RH |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Wintertime indoor air | Spring, summer, and fall | Rainy season in tropical regions |
|  |  |  |
| Smaller aerosols and no inactivation ⇒ FLU SEASON! | Small aerosols and highly concentrated solutes? | Contact transmission from large droplets that have settled? |

# What do we know about SARS-CoV-2 in droplets/aerosols?

# Epidemiological Comparison of Respiratory Viral Infections

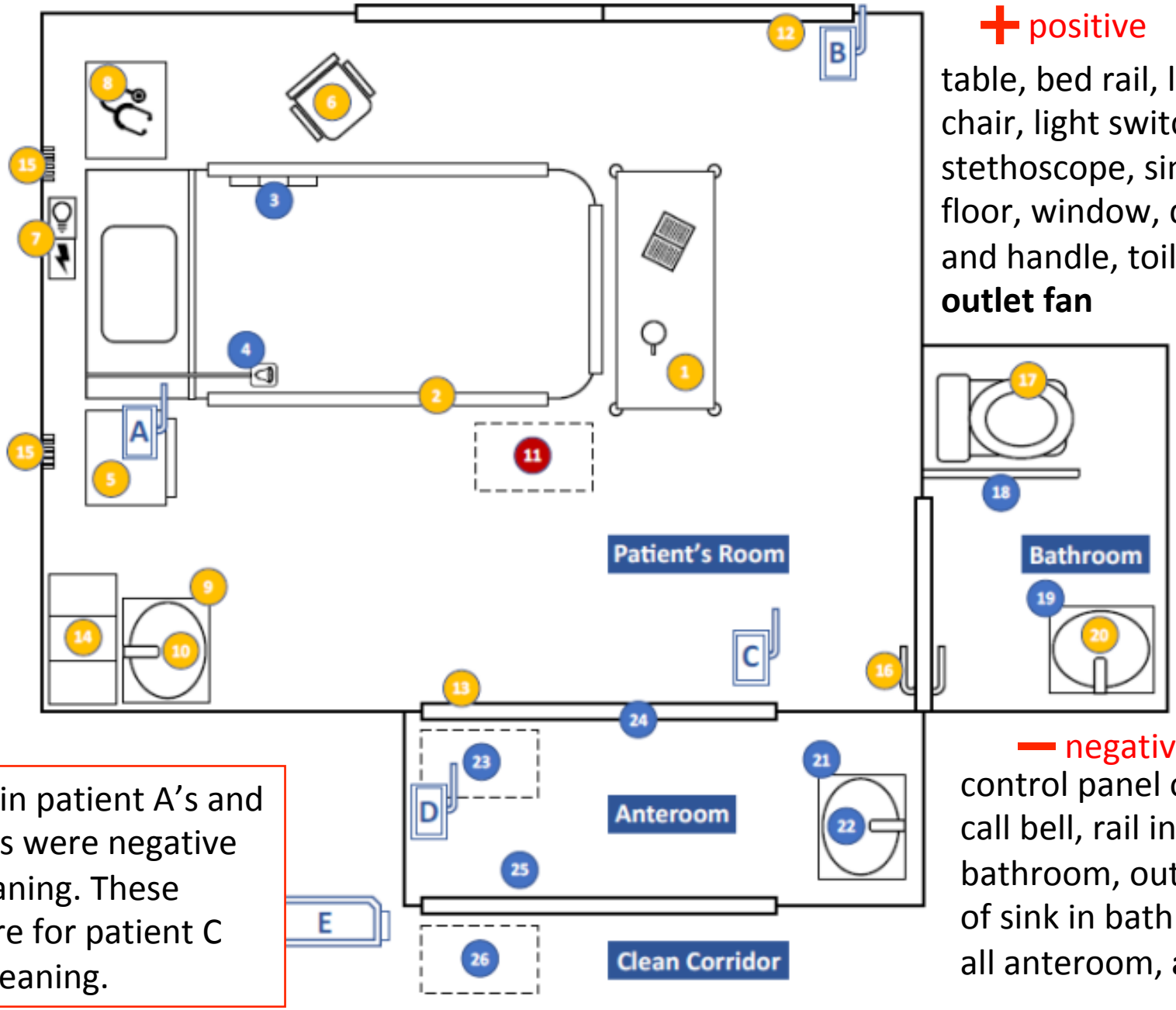
| Disease | Flu | COVID-19 | SARS | MERS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Disease Causing Pathogen** |  Influenza virus |  SARS-CoV-2 |  SARS-CoV |  MERS-CoV |
| **$R_0$** Basic Reproductive Number | **1.3** | **2.0 - 2.5** * | **3** | **0.3 - 0.8** |
| **CFR** Case Fatality Rate | 0.05 - 0.1% | ~3.4% * | 9.6 - 11% | 34.4% |
| **Incubation Time** | 1 - 4 days | 4 - 14 days * | 2 - 7 days | 6 days |
| **Hospitalization Rate** | 2% | ~19% * | Most cases | Most cases |
| **Community Attack Rate** | 10 - 20% | 30 - 40% * | 10 - 60% | 4 - 13% |
| **Annual Infected (global)** | ~ 1 billion | N/A (ongoing) | 8098 (in 2003) | 420 |
| **Annual Infected (US)** | 10 - 45 million | N/A (ongoing) | 8 (in 2003) | 2 (in 2014) |
| **Annual Deaths (US)** | 10,000 - 61,000 | N/A (ongoing) | None (since 2003) | None (since 2014) |

* COVID-19 data as of March 2020.





https://twitter.com/VirusesImmunity/status/1238475009712160769




+ positive

table, bed rail, locker, chair, light switches, stethoscope, sink, floor, window, door and handle, toilet, **air outlet fan**

Samples in patient A's and B's rooms were negative after cleaning. These results are for patient C before cleaning.

– negative

control panel on bed, call bell, rail in bathroom, outer rim of sink in bathroom, all anteroom, **air**



Ong et al., 2020, *JAMA*, https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2762692

# SARS-CoV-2 Size Distributions

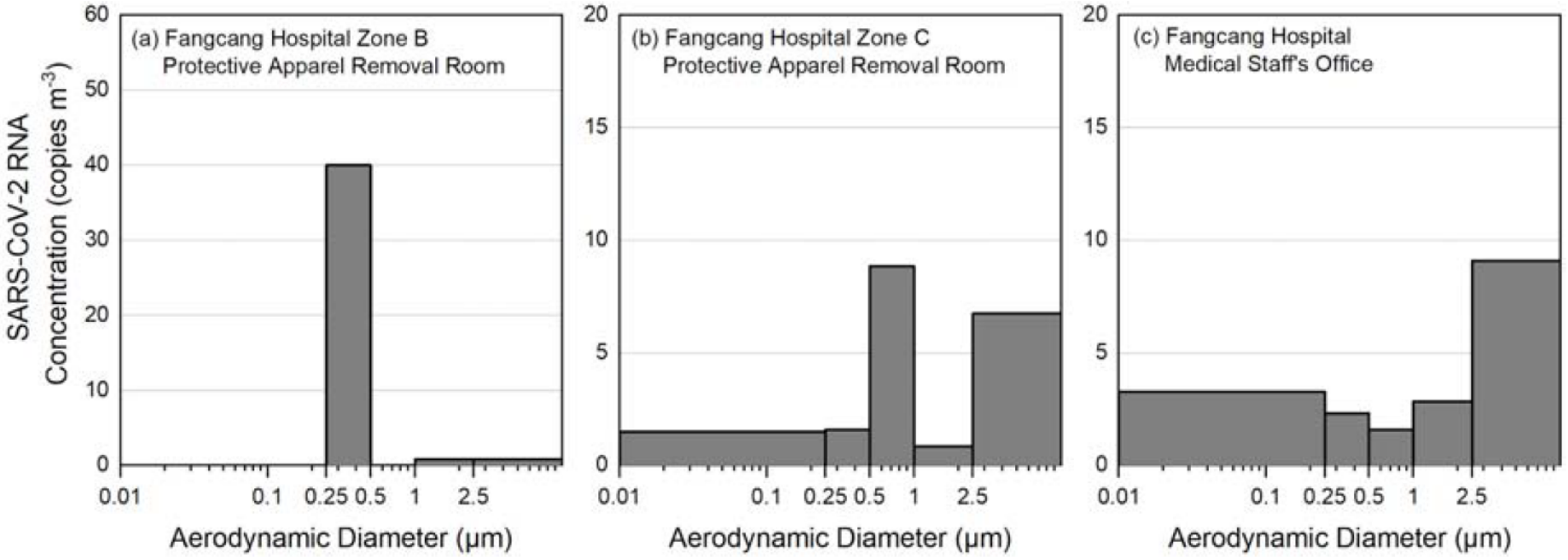
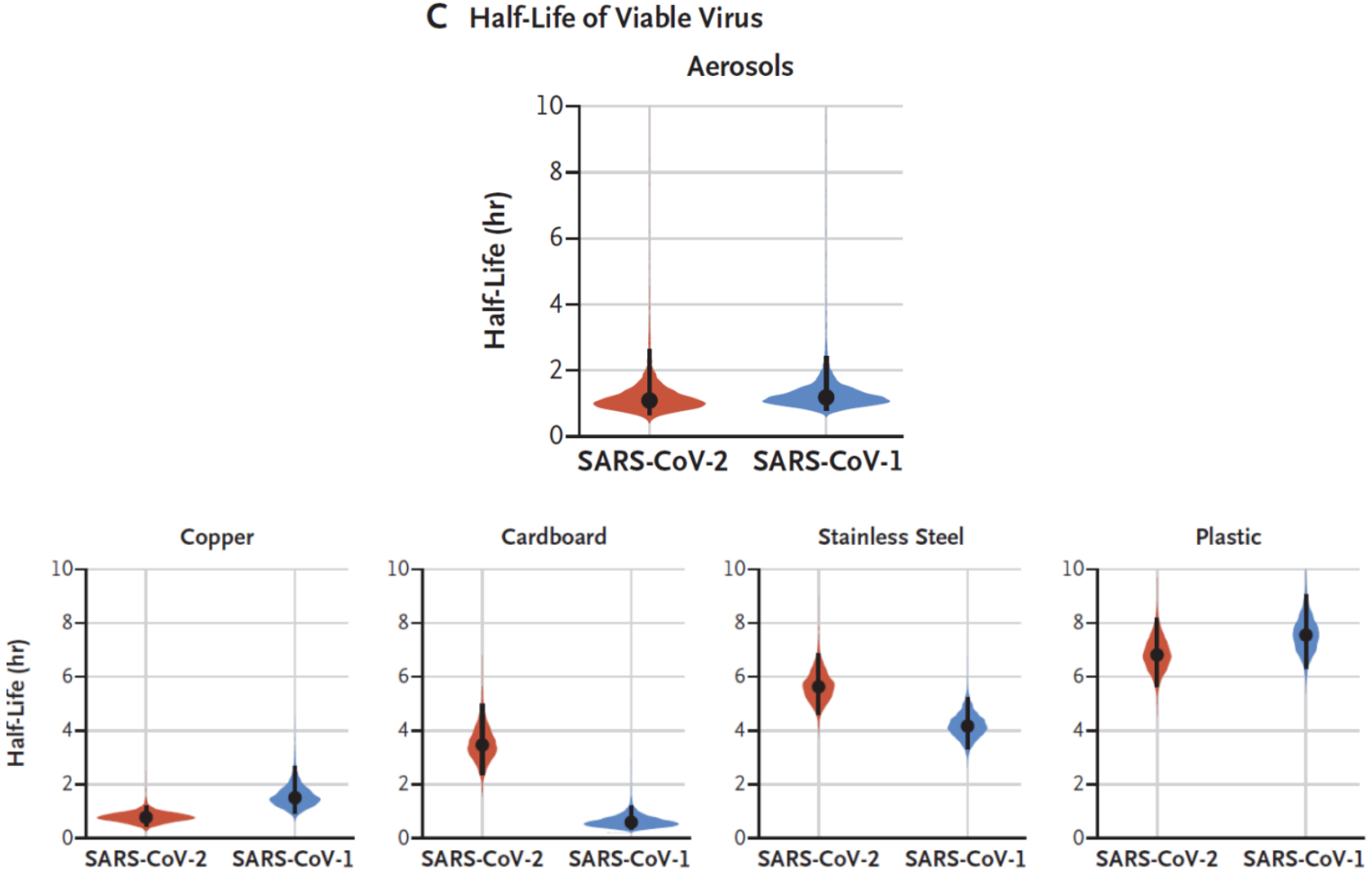



Figure 1 Concentration of airborne SARS-CoV-2 RNA in different aerosol size bins



Liu et al., 2020, preprint, https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.03.08.982637

# SARS-CoV-2 Survival in Aerosols






van Doremalen et al., 2020, NEJM, https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc2004973

# Major Unknowns

- Which transmission route is dominant: direct contact, indirect contact with contaminated objects (fomites), inhalation of aerosols, deposition of droplets?
- How are viruses inactivated in air and on surfaces?
- How much virus is released in what size aerosols at different stages of infection?
- How well does SARS-CoV-2 survive in aerosols under real-world conditions?

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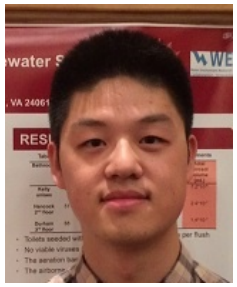






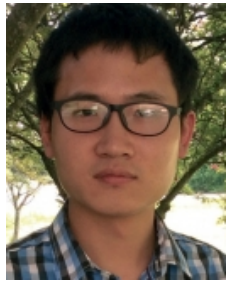


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