**Covid-19 and risks to the elderly**

A recent article in a local medical journal saying Covid-19 is not more deadly for older people than other respiratory diseases has sparked some discussion. How should people assess the risks to the elderly?

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Older people struck by Covid-19 are at higher risk of developing serious infections, that is fact which no one disputes.

But what the experts don’t quite agree on is just how high the risks are and what should be done about it.

Understanding this debate in more detail can help individuals and families make better decisions on how to protect the elderly.

In a commentary in the latest issue of the Annals, the publication of the Academy of Medicine, Prof Lim Lian Arn said that a new risk factor for mortality in respiratory infections is the assumption of a high case fatality rate.

This is a fallacy which might lead investors, institutions, to inappropriate reactions, decisions and actions.

The editorials states that while Covid-19 kills 10 times more infected people than influenza – leading to about 0.1 percent of the population dying compared with 0.4 percent of those infected with swine flu, which kills about 11 times as many infected, is far deadlier.

So in terms of risk for older people, Covid-19 is somewhere between the flu and pneumonia.

But Prof Lim also pointed out that while highly symptomatic, commonly acquired infections such as pneumonia are quite serious for the elderly whose health may already be compromised, Covid-19 can be so different and these times are different.

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