

### COVID-19 Outbreak on a Freighter and Emergency Responses, Taichung Port, 2022

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#### Abstract

In February 2022, two crew members with suspected COVID-19 symptoms on a Hong Kong-registered freighter were reported to Taiwan Centers for Disease Control. The freighter had been departed from the port of Susaki, Japan, and scheduled to unload at Taichung Port. Because the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic was severe and there were also outbreaks of COVID-19 among port staff at other international ports in Taiwan, the Taichung Maritime Port Bureau invited Taichung port competent authorities of customs, immigration, quarantine, and security, as well as other relevant departments to discuss control measures. The control measures were: (1) the freighter should submit interim guidance on managing suspected cases of COVID-19; (2) all crew members should be tested for COVID-19; (3) environmental cleaning and disinfection; (4) isolation of confirmed cases. Twenty-two crew members were tested for COVID-19 using PCR-based tests, and twelve members were positive for COVID-19 with Ct values between 20-36, and the attack rate was 54.5%. Three of the specimens were sequenced and SARS-CoV-2 Omicron BA.2 variant strain was identified. With the collaboration between the stakeholders of Taichung port, further transmission of Omicron BA.2 was prevented. This article describes the control measures and provides a reference for handling the same situation in the future.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, crew cluster, international port, quarantine, cargo ship

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