

Study: SARS can infiltrate brain tissue

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Severe acute respiratory syndrome is a disease of the respiratory tract and now scientists say they've found SARS can also infiltrate brain tissue.

The discovery, detailed in the Oct. 15 issue of *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, now available online, indicates SARS can cause significant central nervous system problems.

The potentially fatal illness caused by a coronavirus was first reported in Asia in February 2003. The disease is usually transmitted by contact with coronavirus-laden droplets sprayed into the air by an infected person's coughing.

Other symptoms can include high fever, headache, body aches, and pneumonia. However, some patients also exhibit central nervous system ailments.

In the most recent study, researchers report the case of a 39-year-old physician who treated SARS patients in China during 2003 and became infected himself.

He showed the usual symptoms of SARS, but after hospitalization he developed vision problems, then progressively worse central nervous system symptoms. Subsequently a computed tomography scan indicated brain damage.

The unidentified doctor died about a month after being hospitalized and

his brain tissue was examined and found to contain the SARS coronavirus.

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