

## UGM Expert: Covid-19 is Uncommonly Transmitted through Eyes to Eyes

Thursday, 17 December 2020 WIB, By: Natasa Adelayanti




It is commonly known that saliva splashes or droplets from the nose and the mouth can most likely infect one individual to others from the SARS Cov-2 virus that causes Covid-19. Then, can someone get infected with the coronavirus through the eye?

Prof. dr. Suhardjo, SU., Sp.M (K)., as the Professor of Ophthalmology, Faculty of Medicine, Public Health, and Nursing, Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM FKKMK), revealed that there were only little cases of conjunctivitis or red eyes in individuals infected with Covid-19. Even so, there is a low possibility that people can be infected with Covid-19 through tears.

"Tears indeed can be a medium of transmission, but it only has a slight possibility because, in eyes, there are no proper receptors for the Covid-19 virus," he explained on Wednesday (16/12).

He added that the highest possible transmission of the coronavirus has occurred through the mouth or nose. In fact, there is mucosal tissue in that area that can be a gate point for viruses. As is known, the oral and nasal cavities have ACE-2 and CD 147 receptors. At the same time, there is also the TMPRSS2 enzyme as the attachment for the Covid-19 virus.



"The receptors are analogically like houses. In the oral cavity and nasal passages, there are indeed suitable receptors for Covid-19," he said.

Meanwhile, based on the literature study published in the Journal of Medical Sciences in July 2020, it was found that only a few Covid-19 patients had conjunctivitis/red eyes. This study found that only 0.8 percent of Covid-19 patients showed symptoms of red eyes.

"Accordingly, only 8 out of 1,000 people had red eyes symptoms in Covid-19 patients, and this number has a 3,8 percent lower than diarrhea symptoms," he said.

To prevent the coronavirus from transmitting through the eyes, Suhardjo suggested the public not touch or rub their eyes with their hands too often. This behavior can prevent us from coronavirus transmission, prevent irritation and infection of other viruses and bacteria in the eyes.

Author: Ika

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Translator: Natasa A

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