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German expert for coronavirus brings virus inhibitors to China



A medical worker treats a patient at Wuhan Jinyintan hospital in Wuhan, China, on Jan 26, 2020. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

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BEIJING (XINHUA) - Rolf Hilgenfeld, a German coronavirus research expert and professor at Lubeck University, brought two inhibitors developed for Sars-CoV to China to test their effects on the 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV), according to China Media Group (CMG).

Hilgenfeld and his team have been devoted to the research of Sars-CoV inhibitors for many years. The inhibitor uses protease acting on the virus to prevent the protein from cracking, thus preventing the formation of the mature virus.

At present, the preparation developed by the team is effective in mice infected with Sars-CoV and stable in human cell culture experiments.

Scientists have found that the 2019-nCov is 80 per cent similar to the Sars-CoV, and the similarity between the protease of these two viruses is as high as 96 per cent. Hilgenfeld hopes that the inhibitors can help the research on 2019-nCov drugs.

In an interview with CMG, he said that the experiments on 2019-nCov will be carried out on mice, and toxicological experiments will be carried out to eliminate other side effects that may be caused by the drugs. Finally, mass production will be possible only through clinical trials.

The coronavirus is self-limiting. After a period of time, when enough people produce antibodies, the continuous spread of the virus can be restricted, thus ending the spread of the epidemic, he said.

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