

## HTI study: A reality check on the use of face masks during the COVID-19 outbreak

During the outbreak of COVID-19, face masks have become an indispensable equipment for local citizens to fight against the coronavirus disease. The correct use of face masks is crucial for its maximum effectiveness to prevent disease transmission as recommended by local and international health authorities.

To explore the public practice on the use of face masks, Dr Shara LEE, an Associate Professor from the Department of Health Technology and Informatics, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) conducted a study from February to April 2020 to investigate the behavior and attitude of Hong Kong people towards the use of face masks during the pandemic.

The team completed an observational study of 10,211 pedestrians in several regions across Hong Kong. The key findings are summarized below:

Use of face masks in Hong Kong public area (n=10,211)	Number of people (%)
Wore face masks	9,683 (95%)
Wore disposable surgical masks	8,544 (84%)
<b>Correctness of wearing surgical masks (n=8,544)</b>	
Wore surgical masks incorrectly	1,113 (13%)
<b>Incorrect wearing of surgical masks (n=1,113)</b>	
Masks 'inside-out' or 'upside-down'	395 (36%)
Wore too low, exposing the nostrils and/or mouth	473 (43%)

An online survey is in progress to explore citizens' views on wearing face masks. A total of 2,859 responses has been collected so far. Intriguingly, 76.3% of respondents reused their masks.

Views on wearing face masks (n=2,859)	Number of people (%)
Believed mass masking reduces the chance of infection and community outbreak	2,690 (94%)
Reused their face masks*	2,181 (76%)

\*A huge proportion was found in the age group 46-55 and > 65 years old.

The findings have been reported in local newspaper and scientific journal:

Press	Title
頭條日報	<a href="#">理大調查指每 8 人有 1 人戴錯口罩 近 8 成市民重用</a>
晴報 – 時事	<a href="#">【新冠肺炎】每 8 人有 1 人戴錯口罩 近 8 成會重用</a>
晴報 – 港聞	<a href="#">港人防疫意識足 1 成人卻戴錯口罩</a>
巴士的報	<a href="#">理大調查：每 8 人有 1 人戴錯口罩 76%市民重用</a>
文匯報	<a href="#">理大調查：八分一市民戴錯口罩 近 8 成會重用</a>
點新聞	<a href="#">理大調查：八分一市民戴錯口罩 近 8 成會重用</a>
星島日報	<a href="#">理大調查指每 8 人有 1 人戴錯口罩 近 8 成市民重用</a>
香港新聞網	<a href="#">港理大調查：近八成市民會重複使用口罩</a>

Journal	Title
Lancet EclinicalMedicine	<a href="#">A reality check on the use of face masks during the COVID-19 outbreak in Hong Kong</a>  <a href="#">Post on Twitter</a>

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