

Table S1. The viral load and days after symptom onset of the 3931 respiratory specimens collected from COVID-19 patients with Ct values  $\leq 18.57$  and  $>18.57$

Case	Total	Ct range		% $\leq 18.57$
		$>18.57$	$\leq 18.57$	
All	3931	2995	936	23.8%
Asymptomatic	604	531	73	12.1%
Symptomatic	3327	2464	863	25.9%

Symptomatic cases

Days after clinical onset

$>1$		1818	496	
$\leq 1$	1013	646	367	
Total			863	
$>2$		1516	298	34.5% 298/863
$\leq 2$	1513	948	565	37.3% 565/1513
			863	
$>3$		1249	176	20.4% 176/863
$\leq 3$	1902	1215	687	36.1% 687/1902
			863	
$>4$		1017	101	11.7% 101/863
$\leq 4$	2209	1447	762	34.5% 762/2209
			863	
$>5$		827	49	5.7% 49/863
$\leq 5$	2451	1637	814	33.2% 814/2451
			863	
$>6$		644	35	4.1% 35/863
$\leq 6$	2648	1820	828	31.3% 828/2648
			863	
$>7$		521	25	2.9% 25/863
$\leq 7$	2781	1943	838	30.1% 838/2781
			863	

% calculated by the following:

57.5% 496/863 (the proportion of specimens having Ct  $\leq 18.57$ , collected  $>$ day 1 after clinical onset)  
 36.2% 367/1013 (the proportion of specimens collected  $\leq$ day 1 after clinical onset, having Ct  $\leq 18.57$ )