

Strategies Adopted to Prevent Adverse Effects of COVID-19 in India

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ABSTRACT

Corona virus disease 2019 has created terror and awe in the minds of people throughout the world. It is rightly said that precaution is always better than cure. Through this paper, I have attempted to make some suggestions on the best practices for eliminating the fatal effects of COVID-19. Responsibility comes with the acceptance of such suggestions and proposals. In this period of crisis, the entire world should unite to fight against corona virus. To beat the spread of this disease, all recommendations and suggestions prescribed by the WHO and the health authorities of different states or countries should be followed properly and wholeheartedly. The World Health Organisation has also provided recommendations every now and then for everyone, and social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp, along with other applications, are providing tips for creating awareness among the public regarding personal hygiene, social hygiene, feeding habits, social distancing and other minute details. Thus, by sincerely following all recommendations and suggestions, along with having faith in God, people can avoid being infected with the coronavirus.

Keywords: corona, COVID-19, suggestions, recommendations, proposals, hygiene, suggestions.

Introduction

Today, the whole world is in a huge panic and is facing a critical challenge in the form of the corona virus. Every country in the world is profoundly infected in almost every aspect by this fatal virus: economic, political, cultural, or psychological. A new Corona virus has been identified that causes symptoms of respiratory illness and an atypical pneumonia in humans (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, 2020). Corona virus disease, now called COVID-19, is a new disease and this disease, with the interim name '2019-nCoV acute respiratory disease (ARD)' [official name: COVID-19], was first identified in the winter month of December 2019 in a city of 11 million people – Wuhan – in Hubei Province, China (Tweeten, Barone, & Wolfson, 2020; World Health Organization, 2020a). The 2019-nCoV ARD is believed to be zoonotic in origin, from bats to intermediate host to humans (Zhou et al., 2020) and its commencement is geographically connected with the Huanan Seafood Market

in Wuhan (Cohen, 2020a). Human-to-human transmission of 2019-nCoV has been established, such as through respiratory droplets (Cai, Cheng, Chen, Hui, & Yuen, 2020) and there is also a suspicion of asymptomatic infection (Cai et al., 2020; Kupferschmidt, 2020).

From the information known to date, several facts are pertinent: that it belongs to the same family of Corona viruses that caused the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak in 2003 and the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) outbreak in 2012. (Choi, Jung, Choi, Hur, & Ki, 2018). Secondly the mortality rate is probably in the range of 1% - 3.4%, which is lower than 10% for SARS and 34% for MERS, but this percentage is significantly higher than the mortality rate for seasonal flu. (Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019). Thirdly, though emerged from animals, the virus is now spreading through human-to human contact. Thus the infection rate for COVID-19 seems to be higher than that for the seasonal flu and MERS. (Wu & McGoogan, 2020).

	Fatality rate (deaths/cases)	Infection rate (per infected person)
Ebola Virus Disease	50%	1.5-2.5 (Kucharski & Althaus, 2015)
MERS	34.30%	0.42–0.92 (Brebán & Riou, 2013; Cauchemez et al., 2014; Fisman & Leung, 2014)
SARS	10%	3
COVID-19	1-3.4%	1.5–3.5
Seasonal Flu	0.05%	1.3

MERS = Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, SARS = Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome.

The disease has been transmitted to other parts of China and to other countries (Singapore, Thailand, Japan, South Korea, Australia, Germany, USA, Philippines, etc.) generally through travel-related activities (Johns Hopkins CSSE, 2020). The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the 2019-nCoV outbreak as a 'Public Health Emergency of International Concern' on 30 January 2020, specifically to strengthen the level of alertness of countries that need additional assistance (World Health Organization, 2020b).

The study has been planned to create awareness among public against COVID-19. India is the world's second most populous country with almost 1.3 billion people and preventing such a large number of people from corona virus infection is a challenging task considering the lack of medical facilities and minimum medical experts and it is true according to the present situation that many public hospitals in India are overcrowded and no proper individual care is given to each patient. Poverty is again a big crisis being faced by India and the latest records bring forward the fact that in 2015, 176 million people were living in extreme poverty (World Bank Group, 2020) thus, in this context, the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown situation are expected to increase poverty in the country. The poor vulnerable community is more exposed to the risk of COVID-19 and the only alternative is to spread awareness about personal hygiene and maintaining social distancing among them through various sources as electronic and print media –TV, mobiles, newspapers, and pamphlets. Therefore the objective of this article is to make people aware of various symptoms of this pandemic and adopting various protective strategies to prevent the adverse effects of COVID-19.

Pandemic lockdown in India was imposed in different four phases—Phase I- from 25th March to 14th April 2020, Phase II—from 15th April to 3rd May 2020, Phase III—from 4th May to 17th May 2020 and Phase IV—from 18th May to 31st May 2020 (Wikipedia, 2020). Now India is passing through the fourth phase of lockdown and still the

situation is same as day by day the number of COVID-19 patients is increasing in certain zones, which have been declared as red zones. Suggestions and recommendations have already been framed by WHO for the health benefits of all people throughout the world. Suggestions pertaining to diet, daily activity, productive use of time during lockdown, therapies, social distancing, wearing masks, maintaining personal and social hygiene have been delivered. The data have been collected from World Health Organisation (WHO), Department of Health, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Medical Council of India, personal advice of elders, old people, parents, family members and friends.

The spread of any type of pandemic in a particular place does not only affect the lives but it also affects every aspect of human lives. This pandemic in the form of corona virus has caused tremendous problems for each and every country. It has affected every small and large scale business. Through the present concept, I have attempted to analyse the present dangerous situation faced by every citizen of this world, to explore valuable information pertaining to COVID-19 along with some valuable suggestions and strategies to prevent the adverse effects of this fatal enemy.

In order to protect ourselves and others from Corona virus, one of the most effective and significant methods is social distancing because by keeping moderate distance from other person the chain of this contagious infection can be broken and no vaccine has been invented till now against COVID-19 (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020) thus, the best way to prevent infection is not to being exposed to this virus. Therefore social distancing is one of the best ways as prescribed by the health authorities. Corona virus spreads basically from person to person with touch, cough droplets, sneezing and close contact. The main cause of spreading infection is from patient's droplets when he coughs, talks or sneezes and these droplets get inhaled into the lungs of nearby people and sometimes people don't show any symptoms of this infection and act as carriers to spread this fatal infection. This is one of the most dangerous situations where people even don't know they are infected and move confidently among public and spread infection unknowingly. Social distancing thus proves to be beneficial for cutting down the infection. This protocol of social distancing has been approved and established as an order for all people around this world by all countries. Through this protocol all people are said to be confined or quarantined in their own houses by eliminating their every sort of social interactions, social communications, and travelling, shopping and other business interactions.

It is obvious that if people don't come in contact with each other, the risk of spreading infection will be much less. Close contact with people should be avoided. While going out always maintain distance of minimum 1 metre from others (World Health Organisation, 2020). The next precaution against corona is the use of sanitizers as recommended by WHO (World Health Organisation, 2020). Nowadays, on social media such ads and information are cropping up day by day to get the public informed. Use of sanitizers is no doubt helpful to reduce infection but doctors have recommended the use of soap and water is much better way to minimize infection. It is suggested by World Health Organization (WHO) that every person should wash hands often with soap and water after touching anything, sneezing, coughing, blowing nose and after coming back from public place. Touching of face, nose, lips, mouth with unwashed hands should be avoided. Sanitizers with 60% of alcohol should be used and cover all surfaces of hands and rub them together until it gets absorbed into the skin (World Health Organisation, 2020). Even by staying at home handles of doors, knobs, latches, tables, keyboards, faucets mobile phones, desks, sinks, toilets and bolts should be sanitized.

Wearing masks is a significant and effective precaution to minimise the spread of infection of corona virus. While going out for purchasing vegetables, fruits or grocery products everyone should wear a mask. It should be kept in mind that kids under age 2 or anyone who has trouble in breathing or is not able to remove mask without any assistance, proper assistance should be made available for them in wearing and removing masks. Once used face mask should be washed properly for its reuse (CDC, 2020). All doctors and nurses throughout world who have been treating patients are taking proper precautions by wearing masks. Those patients who have been quarantined and are kept in separate setting should wear masks or use tissues while sneezing and throw them in the trash.

Children and youth of today are powerful agents of change and act as caretakers for the next generation thus, cataclysm of COVID-19 further provide an opportunity to assist them to learn, develop compassion and increase pliability for building a safer and considerate community. Teachers at large play a significant role in providing basic principles and practices to help students and society to stop the spread of disease. Once used face mask should be washed properly for its reuse.

In this critical period education department is facing much trouble. The lockdown period started in Punjab from 16th of March 2020 and Punjab government issued an advisory thus all educational institutions such as all

government and private schools, colleges and universities had been closed. Therefore students and faculty members have been diverted towards other online education imparting tools such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Google classes, Zoom online classes and other online tools to finish their syllabus. One positive factor of this quarantine period has given an opportunity to all faculty members to learn all new online techniques to impart education and this might be the positive factor of this critical period.

To avoid risk at large scale government has developed strict and precautionary attendance policies. Strict restrictions has been imposed upon the latest trackers to limit their attendance who have visited within the past 70 days from different countries such as China, Italy, UAE, Iran, South Korea and Hong Kong. It should be made mandatory to ask international attendees to show their passports and especially those guests who have recently visited and included in the targeted list of high risk countries should not be allowed for entry. All countries should adhere to the travel restrictions. Any attendee with flu-like symptoms should be discouraged to attend any social gathering and a special care should be taken regarding who have a runny or stuffy nose, cough, sore throat, diarrhoea, nausea within the past two weeks should not be permitted to attend any sort of event. Being a responsible citizen everyone should sincerely follow World Health Organization (WHO) and Centres for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines. Frequent updates should be sent to everyone regardless of their profession on safety rules.

During a self-quarantine period, people get indulged in over-purchasing and this is being seen throughout the world. Panic-buying behaviour always has adverse consequences such as high prices of food stuffs, overconsumption of food and unequal distribution of food products. Therefore, before buying anything hurriedly, one should consider his own needs and plan accordingly. In the time of high crisis, it becomes necessary to make purchases in large amounts but first one should need to look what one has already in his pantry to be consumed on a first serve basis. This will bring less food wastage and allow equal distribution of food.

Always use fresh fruits, vegetables and non-perishables. If all fresh products, such as fruits, veggies and dairy products such as milk, cheese, curd and butter are available on regular basis, always use them first over non-perishables. All such stuff can be stored in refrigerators for longer periods.

Undoubtedly, lockdown period has made people very health conscious and now they have come to know the

real value of homemade food and they are following good food hygiene practices. Only homemade food is healthy food has become the maxim of people's lives. Staying at home now has made this possible to consume only hand-made and hygienic meals. This can be seen on all social websites such as facebook, Instagram and others where people are trying everyday a new recipe. During lockdown period as per safety measures people follow general rules regarding keeping hands, kitchen and utensils clean, using safe and pure water, cooking food properly and keeping distance between raw and cooked food.

Most of people during lockdown period feel anxiety, stress and tension, as they have been deprived of their daily activities and it is true that sometimes changes in life bring happiness and sometimes boredom and this recent change in the routine of people has been brought for their safety concerning their health issues. Thus, to avoid all such negativities they should develop healthy routines such as waking up early, doing meditation, yoga, aerobics, cracking jokes, developing reading habits, reading stress-boosting material and always bearing a positive attitude. Students are in great tension, as the time of their annual or semester exams has not yet fixed by their institutions so instead of taking tension they should use their time productively and constructively in making something new from their learned experiences even online classes are being provided to almost all the students by their faculty members so whatever is being done to compensate the loss of academics is praiseworthy. Thus, all students and teachers should maintain perfect coordination in delivering their material and getting feedback from their students. Everyone should remain optimistic and positive during this critical time and for boosting morale different programmes on stress busters can be seen on television, internet and other social media.

Conclusion

Finally, here my goal is to provide the best practices for public pertaining to this prevalent fatal enemy COVID-19. It is not only the responsibility of officials, government, police department, law department and medical department to inform the public and make the entire community aware about corona virus, but every human being on this planet should be responsible and should show sincerity towards this sensitive issue. Each department, whether police or medical, has made hundred percent sincere efforts towards eliminating fatal infections from the entire world. At this time, all human beings are sailing in the same boat and in this time they should be united physically and emotionally because unity is strength.

With the commencement of this disease, the whole world has become one by eliminating all sorts of barriers and there's no wrong in saying that God has shown his power once more to regenerate the lost faith in Him. We all should understand His message that always reminded us whether we are rich or poor as all such material goods, materialistic attitudes, scientific advancement, modernity are nothing and mere wastage of time and always keep blind trust in God and his power.

At last I want to thank all my family members especially my eldest sister who is doing PhD in History from Punjabi University, Patiala. She has given me good assistance in writing this article on COVID-19. My mother shared her valuable suggestions on how by keeping personal hygiene we can protect ourselves from this fatal infection. I am very grateful to my sister-in-law, Dr. Amanpreet Kaur, Assistant Professor of Punjabi at Patel Memorial College, Rajpura, for her precious words to prevent corona infection. I appreciate all social media and sites for sharing latest information regarding COVID-19. All types of communication whether written or oral has helped me a lot in writing this article.

Competing Interest Statement

The author has declared that no competing interest exists.

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