

Covid 19 - Dissecting the Conundrum

Ravikumar*

Oral Pathologist, GDC, Kottayam, Kerala, India

***Corresponding Author:** Ravikumar, Oral Pathologist, GDC, Kottayam, Kerala, India.

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Our world is under siege by a virus, named Covid 19. Believed to be transmitted to humans at the “wet markets” of China, Covid 19 has now spread to the nook and corner. Humans have taken shelter and restricted themselves, in course of preventing this pandemic. The spread continues at varied pace and is raising numerous questions in our mind.

The SARS attack was a warning sign, ignored except for countries like Singapore and Korea. These countries started thermal screening in airports, developed testing kits and followed stringent protocols after the same. All of this proved valuable in preventing large scale transmission of Covid 19 virus in these countries.

A pandemic results in a data overload. Journalists, data analysts, scientists, researchers and doctors practicing different forms of medicine tend to put forward views and suggestions regarding the various aspects of pandemic. The common man may find this difficult to comprehend; hence it is imperative that government circulates repeatedly the required information in the simplest of the forms through all means available so as to reach the common man.

The common man in time of Covid 19 spread must be able to learn the proper technique of hand washing and sanitizer use. Use of masks must be clearly outlined.

The personnel dealing with confirmed or suspected cases of Covid positive need N 95 masks along with full personal protective gear and ensuring strict adherence to universal precautions.

The personnel who have a high chance of getting infected must use a 3 layer surgical mask along with stringent hand washing protocols. A person can spread the virus 2 days prior to developing symptoms or may be asymptomatic. The low risk individuals like the common man may be required to use a cotton mask, which may even be home made. These studies reinforce the need for physical barrier protection for all, as was practiced in Czech Republic.

The Covid 19 has shown different rates of transmission and mortality in different countries. The virus seems to affect and claim more causality in low temperature areas. The virus may be partially inactivated in hot temperatures or the low temperature may have worsened the respiratory symptoms in the host. The level of hygiene and personal exposure to dirt and disease in developed countries may be another confounding factor. The stigma of diseases vary; with developed countries having a greater load of life style diseases in contrast to vector borne infections like malaria in developing ones. The vaccination schedule also varies, with emphasis of BCG vaccine given more thoroughly and holistically in developing countries. All these may have a role in the varying rate of progression of Covid in different countries.

The affected nations are trying to control the pandemic with complete lockdown. The success of lockdown depends on compliance of the citizens. Society is made up of individuals with different ideologies following different practices. It is a great challenge in every aspect

to maintain a lockdown for weeks as it is practiced now in many countries. The continuous operation of all essential activities amidst lockdown is indeed a herculean task. It has been known that a time period of 15 to 30 minutes spend at vicinity of less than 6 feet of a carrier without any protective barrier is enough to transmit the disease.

The economic implications are vast. The stock markets might crash. Panic buying of essential items by the citizens and hoarding of the same by zealous merchants may also occur. The government has the responsibility to assure the availability of all essential items. The end game is maintaining health of all, rather than the economy. Everyday a citizen remains in lockdown; he is saving himself and preserving health of the society. He is saving the nation from burden of hospitalization of many. The lockdown should be considered as a step back for a mighty leap as evident from the example we have from China.

Covid 19 pandemic is here to stay for a while. Reports of a second wave of infections are coming. It will have repercussions in every aspect of our life, but for good. It will necessitate the incorporation of study of basic health practices in our education system, highlight significance of vaccination, and reinforce need of allocation of more resources towards development of facilities and research in health sector. Most important of all it will teach that together we can survive even the greatest of the threats.

Stay indoors, Stay safe.

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