

COVID-19: Prevention is the Preferred Strategy

M Tanveer Hossain Parash*

Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia.

Corresponding Author: Tanveer Hossain Parash:parash_cmc@ums.edu.my, Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia

Abstract

Almost 9 million people have been diagnosed as confirmed cases of COVID-19, and nearly half a million succumbed to death due to COVID-19 globally until 23 June 2020 [1]. The first case of this recent pandemic was identified in early December 2019 in the capital of the Hubei province of China, i.e., Wuhan [2]. Till-to-date, there is no effective treatment for this highly contagious "novel enveloped RNA betacoronavirus infection"[3].

Clark et al. Analyzed data from 188 countries around the world and estimated that 1.7 billion people around the world have the potentiality to develop 'severe' illness, and around 350 million people would require hospitalization in case of being infected even without having underlying conditions [4] like asthma, chronic kidney disease being treated with dialysis, chronic lung disease, diabetes, hemoglobin disorders, immunocompromised, liver disease, people aged 65 years and older, people in nursing homes or long-term care facilities, serious heart conditions, severe obesity [5].

As long as there is no approved solution for this "emerging, rapidly evolving situation" [6] we need to follow "prevention is better than cure" policy. The "best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus." To avoid exposure to this novel coronavirus, which "is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person" nearby (within about 6 feet or 1.8 metres) in the form of droplets from an infected person's mouth or nasal cavity while he or she "coughs, sneezes or talks." The infection might spread not only from the infected person but also from persons having no symptoms [7].

It is possible to reduce the possibilities of being exposed to COVID-19 through some simple steps. Everyone should wash both hands at least for 20 seconds before touching eyes, nose, and mouth. It is mandatory if the person visited a public place immediately before it. Everyone should cover mouth and nose with a face mask made of cloth, preferably not the masks meant for healthcare workers, when he or she is around others irrespective of being in a public place like groceries, parking lot, or public transports. These masks are not recommended for the toddlers (children below two years) and "anyone who has trouble in

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"breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance." Everyone should always practise covering the face and nose with the inner side of the bent elbow (if the face mask or tissue is not there) while sneezing or coughing. Everyone should maintain social distancing. Even the face mask is not "a substitute for social distancing." The minimum distance between two individuals should be at least 6 feet or 1.8 meters. If anyone develops minor symptoms like cough, headache, mild fever, he or she should stay at home and self-isolate. Everyone should have up to date knowledge regarding COVID-19 by seeking information from reliable sources like local and national authorities where the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) should be given the most priority [7-9].

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