

*Editorial**From the Editor's Desk****Corona Virus and the Humans***

“He who cures a disease may be the skillfullest, but he that prevents it is the safest physician.” — Thomas Fuller

Corona viruses are large encapsulated RNA viruses that cause disease primarily in mammals and birds. While in chickens they primarily cause respiratory disease, in mammals they lead to diarrhoea and gastric malfunction. Human involvement can occur occasionally and the respiratory tract gets compromised. While it tends to be mild in the form of common cold in most cases, severe involvement may lead to severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). The latter can be associated with mortality as high as 30%.

There are seven known strains of Corona virus which cause disease in humans. Four of these strains (229E, NL63, OC43 and HKU1) have been present in humans for decades and have typically caused a mild disease including fever, sore throat and other features of upper respiratory tract infection. Corona Viruses caught attention in 2003, when they caused the outbreak of SARS in Asia with mortality rate of 10% and killed around 750 people. The virus was named as SARS-CoV. In the subsequent decade three small outbreaks of corona virus infection occurred in middle east. Though it was associated with high mortality rate of around 30%, the number of deaths collectively was around 470. This was due to poor human to human transmission of the virus. This virus was named a MERS-CoV. In December 2019, novel strain of corona virus, now called SARS-CoV2/Covid-19 lead to pneumonia outbreak in Wuhan, China. This strain was highly contagious and within a matter of eight weeks has become a pandemic which has spread to most parts of world. World health organisation (WHO) declared it as a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) on 30 January 2020 and said that it characterised as PANDEMIC on 11th march 2020. As of now, around 3.0 million confirmed cases and 2,40,000 deaths have been reported in all parts of the world. With no definitive treatment and vaccine, it has lead to an unforeseen grave health emergency all over the world.

The only major weapon against the virus is to prevent its spread. Few suggested parameters to ward off the virus include a meticulous hand hygiene, maintaining safe distance from each other and to self quarantine in the event of symptoms of the disease. A very basic fact that the virus is encapsulated makes it susceptible to any soap when used for sufficient time as that would lead to saponification of its capsule. To help prevent the spread of the disease, large parts of the world had been put under lockdown which is being slowly eased out. The virus may therefore spread unhindered if precautions are not taken at this stage. The health services remain under stress in most affected countries. While ocular involvement with Covid-19 is limited to self limiting conjunctivitis, ophthalmologists would play a crucial role in preventing the spread of disease. This will include careful clinical practices as well as patient education. All medical practitioners need to be alert as all the members of health services may be required to pitch in with their expertise and efforts. We all must be clear on our basic medicine knowledge and keep ourselves updated on the subject, in case we are required to boost up the existing health services.

As an old saying is “hope for the best and prepare for the worst”.

Let all of us be safe and protected and take all the preventive measures we can.

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