

Editorial

From the Editor's Desk



Learning From Covid-19: The Beginning Of The End

Almost a year after the first case of COVID-19, India has reported nearly 11 million cases and 156 thousand deaths from this deadly virus. The month of February has shown the lowest number of infections since its peak somewhere in September 2020. Sero-surveys have shown antibody positivity in 50-60% of population at least in certain parts of country. The vaccination drive underway, with two indigenous vaccines, is a further positive news in the story of pandemic. However rising cases in Kerala and Maharashtra along with the discovery of mutant strains raise alarm and indicate that the "Covid era" is far from over.

In spite of a massive social, economic and personal impact, this pandemic has lessons to teach. First and foremost, Covid has been a reminder about the importance of simple hygienic measures and their role in health and disease. Several morbidities especially in the developing world can be traced back to poor personal hygiene. Regular hand hygiene would go a long way in limiting fomite-related transmission of infectious diseases. This along with optimum food hygiene can lead to decrease in several food borne diseases as well.

Secondly, the widespread use of face masks have been a boon against other air borne diseases. Tuberculosis (TB) has long been our enemy and is one of the major causes of morbidity and mortality in India and the developing world. The treatment of TB is difficult and involves multi-drug regimens to be administered over 6-12 months period. Drug resistance even to multiple drugs is common. Healthcare workers are at a significantly higher risk of TB because of higher exposure. While we all have been wearing face masks in operation theatres to avoid contamination of air with our nasal and oral flora, it is time to extend this practice to other parts of our stratosphere as well especially in TB endemic countries. This will help to prevent various air borne infections including TB and go a long way in containing this peril. It will also reduce the number of man-hours lost due to common infections like influenza, and possibly limit the damage due to poor air quality and air pollution.

Lastly, Covid-19 has reminded the whole world that health is the most important factor for a complete and fulfilling life, a fact which is often forgotten in modern world of frenzied untamed consumerism. Restrictions and lock downs due Covid-19 have allowed us to reconnect to ourselves and to our families. Not only could we revisit our old lost hobbies, it unearthed certain hidden talents as well. Hopefully the contagion would be contained shortly and we would be better living beings with these positives from a once in a life time calamity.

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DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7869/djo.613>