

Editorial

From the Editor's Desk



Covid and Mucor: Double Whammy

The second wave of Covid-19 in India has made us realise our worst fears. While we did fairly well to contain the first wave in the country, the fatigue from extended lockdowns, vaccine hesitancy, inability to learn from other countries and lack of farsightedness among policy makers made sure that the mutant virus (which was easier to transmit) hit us with its full might. The number of cases went up vertically with few places including Delhi reporting a positivity rate nearing 50%. Nearly 400,000 cases a day with 4000 deaths a day were noted near the peak. With greater number of cases among young adults, the chaos was unimaginable. Lack of hospital beds across cities and states, shortage of medical supplies especially medical grade oxygen left many gasping for breath. With lockdowns announced once again, the ambulance sirens were common sounds day and night.

The peak dwindled quickly as a result of lockdowns and strict Covid appropriate behaviour amongst the general population. However a rising number of cases of sino-orbital Mucormycosis added insult to the existing injury. While I myself encountered a few patients of mucormycosis in my Covid-19 posting during the first wave, these have been particularly common in the second wave. Mucormycosis is a grave disease with high morbidity and mortality even if treated aggressively. Now another set of medications are in great demand and are in short supply. Not a single ophthalmic surgeon alive has ever seen so many Mucormycosis patients in such a short period of time. The exact cause of Mucormycosis however remains elusive. Some factors that are common amongst these patients are diabetic status, use of systemic steroids and sample collection from oropharynx and nasopharynx with a cotton swab. Other factors like oxygen inhalation, overzealous Zinc supplements and poor immunity have also been suspected to play a role. Several cases of covid-19 related endogenous fungal endophthalmitis have also been reported from several centres.

While going through all this, the other diseases and their impact on humanity seem to be forgotten. These are the worst times to have any other disease as most of the public health sector has been diverted to tackle Covid-19. The vaccine seems to be the only hope and we must vaccinate a majority of our population in order to prevent the devil from attacking us again. Meanwhile we must not forget that enemy is strong and covid appropriate behaviour is our only weapon to avoid the third wave.

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