

"New Normal"- Corona Era**Aprajita Mehta¹, Yogesh Bahurupi², Mahendra Singh², Pradeep Aggarwal³**¹MPH student, ²Assistant Professor, ³Associate Professor, Department of Community and Family Medicine, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Rishikesh, Uttarakhand, India**Correspondence:** Dr. Pradeep Aggarwal, **Email:** drpradeep_aggarwal@hotmail.com

Word "Normal" according to Cambridge dictionary means usual or the same as would be expected. So, when the things change from what is usually expected in a day to day life and the change is going to stay for long it becomes the 'New Normal'. This has been experienced globally after the COVID-19 Pandemic. Things which were very usual and considered normal like travelling in a public transport, greeting people with handshakes or hugs, eating out in a crowded restaurant and roaming in markets or malls suddenly became a threat for the spread of the coronavirus. Terms like quarantine, isolation, lockdown, physical distancing etc. were now used more commonly.

The novel coronavirus is also called SARS CoV-2 which causes infectious disease known as COVID- 19. Initial outbreak was seen in Wuhan [China] and was announced as a pandemic later by the World Health Organization on 30 January 2020.^[1] On the same day, the first case of COVID-19 was reported in India from the state of Kerala.^[2]

Most common symptoms are Fever, dry cough and tiredness. But some patients even experienced aches, nasal congestion, runny nose, diarrhea and sore throat. Most people [80%] despite being infected do not experience any symptoms. In symptomatic cases symptoms can range from very mild to severe acute respiratory illness.^[3] In a recent study in which laboratory surveillance data of India from January 22 to April 30 was analyzed, it was reported that '25.3% cases were asymptomatic family contacts, 10.6% were symptomatic contacts and 10.5 per cent were Severe Acute respiratory illness patients out of the total 40,184 positives case'. Among the symptomatic cases, cough [64.5%] and fever [60%] were the most common symptoms reported at the time of sample collection. Less than 5% cases reported

gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain and diarrhea.^[4]

Person to person transmission occurs through droplets from mouth or nose and contact routes. Droplets being heavy cannot travel far [within 1 metre] after expulsion and quickly settle on a surface. Incubation period on an average is 5-6 days but it can be up to 14 days. Elderly and people with existing comorbidities are more likely to experience severe illness.^[3]

To control the spread of disease many measures were taken by the Indian government and the major one was the implementation of Lockdown. Lockdown was announced by Prime Minister of India on 24 March 2020. Citizens were not allowed to go out of their houses except to buy essentials commodities or for health emergencies.^[5] Concept of "Work from Home" has been adopted by many public and private organizations, students are taught with the help of virtual technology by online classes, essentials are delivered at the door steps but with contact less methods and awareness campaigns through mass media have been started by different state governments. This was done at the national level but at an individual level, certain measures are recommended like hand washing by using soap and water for at least 40 seconds or cleaning hands with an alcohol-based hand rub for at least 20 seconds as coronavirus can be transmitted through contact routes. While sneezing or coughing it is advised to practice cough etiquette in which nose and mouth are covered with a bent elbow or tissue.^[3]

As droplet transmission is reported so it is advised to wear a mask while stepping outside the home. Medical masks are for the health workers, infected and at risk individuals when required and is a critical

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resource. Non medical masks can be used for the daily use. According to WHO the fabric mask should contain three layers-the internal layer should be made of a hydrophilic material for example cotton, middle layer should be hydrophobic made up of non-woven material [synthetic] like polypropylene and the outermost layer should be able to limit the external penetration to the wearer's nose and mouth suitably made of a hydrophobic material like polypropylene, polyester, or their blends.^[6] Homemade mask or fabric mask should not be shared and guidelines given by the Government of India for its wash and maintenance should be followed.^[7] One cannot imagine going out without wearing a mask as it has become the 'New Normal' accessory.

If someone is wearing the correct mask that doesn't guarantee complete safety from coronavirus, along with it proper practice of hand-washing, physical distancing and cough etiquette is equally important.

Physical Distancing as described by CDC "keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home".^[8] The guidelines of Government of India advice citizens to maintain a distance of 6 feet from other people when going out to the market, restaurant or a religious place. At the time of unlock phase 1 it will be wise to Avoid gathering/crowd if possible, in case of any event organization the invitees should be kept to the minimum. Rather than going to restaurants and dine-in, take outs should be preferred to minimize prolonged contact with other people.^[9,10] Take away parcels, no jammed or stuffed gatherings/parties and no hugs/handshakes are the "New Normal" of social life.

Certain people believe that wearing multiple mask, smoking and taking antibiotics without any prescription will save them from getting infected but this is not effective against COVID-19.^[3]

It is very important to be vigilant regarding own health, district and state authorities should be reported at the earliest in case of any illness so that proper management can be done. For any guidance regarding the concerns and issues on Covid-19, 1075 is the national helpline.^[9]

In the summer season it is very common to have Air conditioners in the offices and restaurants. But now it should be kept in mind to set the temperature in the range of 24-30°C with 40-70% relative humidity as per

the government guidelines. Cross Ventilation should be maintained and intake fresh air as much as possible. In offices and restaurants, the surfaces which are regularly touched should be disinfected with 1% sodium hypochlorite.^[9,10]

In lockdown with restrictions and curfews, staying indoors and working from home can take a toll not only on physical health but also on mental health. For boosting immunity and self care certain guidelines are given by Ministry of AYUSH which includes drinking warm water, practicing yoga, Pranayama and meditation for minimum 30 minutes. It also suggests consumption of 'Chyavanprash', 'Golden Milk' and some other measures that can be practiced as per the convenience of an individual. These suggestions can be incorporated into routine for good health.^[11] Practicing self-care by incorporating exercise and nutritious diet should become a "New Normal" to be able to maintain good health.

Listening to the news updates regarding COVID-19 and not being able to meet friends and family can cause anxiety and fear. At our end, it becomes pertinent that we should ensure that the news we listen and share are from reliable sources only. It's advisable not to follow the sensational social media posts that can have an impact on one's mental status. "Work from Home" can also be taxing on one's mental health with no proper time limit for the work hours. So, whenever feeling anxious, slow down your mind by thinking of something soothing and calm. Don't cut yourself socially try to stay connected with your friends and family with the help of phone and social media. Do not discriminate against people who are infected or got recovered from COVID-19.^[12] In the time of pandemic stress, anxiety, fear and panic had become the "New Normal" but one should try to remain calm and if these emotions prevail contact a specialist.

Government of India launched an application "Arogya Setu" which helps a person to assess risk of catching coronavirus by detecting the proximity of any contacts that are positive. In case a person doesn't have access to Smart phone the alternative is "Arogya Setu Interactive Voice Response System [IVRS]" where the person is asked to give a missed call on 1921 which is a toll-free number and inputs regarding his/her health will be recorded in a return call. Further SMS alerts will also be provided regarding the same.^[13,14]

It is a very useful app in case of going out of your home for various activities like travelling, shopping, visiting religious places and also for workers in different workplaces. This application will alert people regarding any contact with an infected person. This mobile application has become the “New Normal” with more than 100 million downloads.

The government is providing relaxation in the lockdown and restrictions, various non-essential services, business, schools and colleges will begin again. Relaxation does not mean that we are not at risk of getting infected from coronavirus and can go back to the way of living before the pandemic. As lockdown cannot be extended until we are free from coronavirus, the current lifestyle should be considered as a new normal. Physical distancing, hand washing and wearing mask are the preventive aspects that we have to follow so that we win this battle against coronavirus till we get a cure. We all have heard that prevention is better than cure; it's time to follow this saying by preventing the spread of coronavirus.

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