



BASICS OF COVID-19: MYTH BUSTERS AND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN OLDER ADULTS

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Abstract:

As of **29 SEP.2020**, India has recorded **61,45,291** confirmed COVID-19 cases, including **96,318 1.57%** deaths. People have deceased to the infection while **51,01,397** have recovered. Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu have reported the highest number of cases. However, infections are rising rapidly in states like Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Yet India's recovery rate continues to rise and now stands at **83.01%**. Globally, as of **29 SEP.2020**, there have been **3,30,34,598** confirmed cases of COVID-19, across 235 Countries, areas, territories which have led to **99,63,342** confirmed deaths, reported to World Health Organization. The COVID-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes, so it's important that you also practice respiratory etiquette. Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness. Older adults are consistently reported to be more vulnerable to COVID-19. According to the Centre for disease control and Prevention (CDC), older adults with COVID-19 are more likely to be hospitalized (31-59%) and die of it (4-11%). This risk is much higher in older adults above the age of 85 years.

Index Terms- COVID-19, Myth busters, Mental health and Prevention.

Introduction:

The coronavirus outbreak came to light on December 31, 2019 when China informed the World Health Organisation of a cluster of cases of pneumonia of an unknown cause in Wuhan City in Hubei Province. Subsequently the disease spread to more Provinces in China, and to the rest of the world. The WHO has now declared it a pandemic. The virus has been named SARS-CoV-2 and the disease is now called COVID-19. Antibiotics do not work against viruses. Some people who become ill with COVID-19 can also develop a bacterial infection as a complication. In this case, antibiotics may be recommended by a health care provider. There is currently no licensed medication to cure COVID-19. However, those infected with the virus should receive appropriate care to relieve and treat symptoms, and those with severe illness should receive optimized supportive care. Some specific treatments are under investigation, and will be tested through clinical trials. Antibiotics work only against bacteria, not viruses. COVID-19 is caused by a virus, and therefore antibiotics should not be used for prevention or treatment. However, if you are hospitalized for COVID-19, you may receive antibiotics because bacterial co-infection is possible.

Older people and younger people can be infected by the COVID-19 virus. Older people and people with pre-existing medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, and heart disease appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with the virus. WHO advises people of all ages to take steps to protect themselves from the virus. Vaccines against pneumonia, such as pneumococcal vaccine and Homophiles influenza type B vaccine, do not provide protection against the new coronavirus. The virus is so new and different that it needs its own vaccine. Researchers are trying to develop a vaccine against COVID-19, and WHO is supporting their efforts. Although these vaccines are not effective against COVID-19, vaccination against respiratory illnesses is highly recommended to protect your health. There is no reason to believe that cold weather can kill the new coronavirus or other diseases. The normal human body temperature remains around 36.5°C to 37°C, regardless of the external temperature or weather. The most effective way to protect yourself against the new coronavirus is by frequently cleaning your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or washing them with soap and water. While several drug trials are ongoing, there is currently no proof that hydroxychloroquine or any other drug can cure or prevent COVID-19. The misuse of hydroxychloroquine can cause serious side effects and illness and even lead to death. WHO is coordinating efforts to develop and evaluate medicines to treat COVID-19.

Mental health issues:

- ❖ Sleeplessness, feeling anxious, boredom, panic attacks, nightmares, feeling of emptiness, fear of contracting COVID-19, fear of spreading the infection to others, health anxiety, feeling of imprisonment, anxiety related to uncertainty about future, anxiety about death and dying in unnatural circumstances without access to other relatives are some of the psychological issues that can occur in older adults.
- ❖ Some of them may develop depression, anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse and related psychiatric disorders in these stressful situations.

Psychological interventions for mental health issues:

- ❖ This will require brief psychological and psychosocial intervention that can be delivered by any health care personnel, volunteers, etc with some guidance and training from mental health professionals.
- ❖ Older adults need reassurance that most of the mental health issues experienced in these situations are normal reactions to abnormal stress.
- ❖ They should also get appropriate information and clarification about various myths and false messages that are being spread through multiple unreliable sources.
- ❖ Guidance about maintaining a routine, physical exercise, Yoga, meditation, healthy diet, mental stimulation through home-based activities with appropriate safety precautions is essential.
- ❖ Brief relaxation exercises and supportive therapy can be done for those having severe psychological distress.
- ❖ Treatment by mental health professionals including medications and other interventions may be required for those with severe mental health disorders and emergencies.

Prevention:

- Wear a face mask.
- Wash your hands often.
- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Always cover your cough or sneeze.
- Stay home as much as possible.
- Maintain social and physical distancing.
- Avoid exposure to large gathering and crowds.

Conclusion:

- ❖ It is necessary to bear in mind that older adults are more vulnerable both physically and psychologically to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ❖ All stakeholders must work together to ensure their health and well-being.
- ❖ The corona virus disease (COVID-19) is caused by a virus, not by bacteria.
- ❖ There are no medicines that can prevent or treat COVID-19
- ❖ Antibiotics cannot prevent or treat COVID-19
- ❖ People of all ages can be infected by the COVID-19 virus
- ❖ People of all ages can be infected by the COVID-19 virus
- ❖ Rinsing your nose with saline does not prevent COVID-19
- ❖ Vaccines against pneumonia do not protect against the COVID-19 virus
- ❖ Cold weather and snow cannot kill the COVID-19 virus
- ❖ There are currently no drugs licensed for the treatment or prevention of COVID-19

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Conflicts of interest: We declare that we have no conflicts of interest.

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