

Letter to Editor

COVID-19: Focus on Human Behavior too

As of April 23, 2021 (11.15 GMT) more than 145 million new cases and more than 3 million deaths were reported worldwide; more than 18% cases and 7% deaths were reported from eight countries of South Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Maldives, Pakistan, Sri Lanka¹).

SARS-CoV-2 is commonly transmitted among the people at close range through inhalation². The evidence of specific and effective treatment till date for the COVID-19 is very limited³. The vaccination against SARS, CoV-2 remains a source of hope⁴. But the evidence of its effectiveness against reinfection and transmission of infection is limited⁵. Still following appropriate COVID-19 behavior in other words public health measures is a better containment strategy.

Pakistan reported 784,108 cases and 16,842 deaths as of April 22, 2021. Only sixty years of age and above are getting vaccine at present⁶. At this stage, Pakistan faces third wave of Coronavirus Pandemic. Limited number of people in Pakistan follows public health guidelines issued by Government⁷. There is very low compliance of use of mask and social distancing even seen in public gathering; both are the risk factors for the resurgence of SARS CoC-2 infection⁸. Many people including healthcare worker avoids to get vaccinated⁷.

The rationale behind using the mask and following the physical distancing is to break the chain of transmission of SARS CoV-2 infection. These are the two important features of COVID-19 appropriate behavior to be exercised by the people in general⁹.

There is deliberate behavior of people disregarding the preventive measures and precautions in Pakistan. It seems that we are undisciplined as far as human behavior is concerned but it is accepted that behavior of the people cannot be changed overnight, by issuing guidelines like wearing masks, follow physical distancing, wash hands with soap and water, avoid large gatherings. In fact, it is an ongoing long-term phenomenon. Public health authority which should focus on its implementation on the daily basis, assessed regularly and campaign continuously.

It is imperative to inculcate and teach children the essential preventive measures and necessary precautions regarding common communicable and non-communicable disease highly prevalent in the community. Government has to enhance the health literacy of public involving all stakeholders not only contain this pandemic but to face future epidemics smartly.

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