

# Gaps in Treatment of Non COVID Patient during COVID-19 Pandemic in India: A Review

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**Abstract:** *Non COVID patient have had challenges of getting medical treatment during this pandemic situation. In the country maximum number of OPDs, clinics, diagnostic centers, operation theaters are shut down, as a result non COVID acute and chronic patients are not getting the treatment immediately. Fear of catching infection from new patients many hospitals is not taking admission without doing COVID test. Now getting a COVID test done is another difficult task because the result and reports are available at least 24-48 hours later. Sometimes patients also hesitate to seek treatment to the hospital for fear of getting infected with corona virus. Due to these gaps we are observing, quite a high number of patients with Stroke, Heart attack, gastro, diabetic and orthopedic emergencies are getting delayed intervention and recovery. As a result it leads to disability or death.*

**Keywords:** Gaps, Treatment, Non COVID patient, COVID 19, Pandemic

## 1. Introduction

COVID-19 is the contagious disease caused by the most recently discovered corona virus. This disease was unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019<sup>1</sup>. In India first COVID 19 case was reported on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020 in Kerala<sup>2</sup>. As on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2020, there were 1, 02,638 Active Cases, 1, 01,573 Recovered, 1 Migrated and 5,875 Deaths in India. Recovery rate has improved significantly with 48.19% amongst COVID-19 patients (on 02.06.2020)<sup>3</sup>. The country's entire hospital setting working towards fighting COVID 19, but patients with disease like HIV, Cancer, Renal diseases who need to get their hospital regularly to continue their treatment are facing quite a bit of problem<sup>4</sup>.

### Non COVID emergency treatment and problem facing by patient

Non-COVID patients needing treatments like dialysis and chemotherapy, blood transfusion are being ignored even as doctors from various hospitals say that the PPE kits are of lower quality and all the patient are not being screened at all. In the maximum hospital only few emergency services functional and most OPDs, clinic and operation theatres closed<sup>5</sup>. Fear of corona virus and the need for quarantine should not discourage people from seeking treatment for non-COVID acute medical and surgical emergencies. In this lockdown period many of the patient and relatives seeking medical attention very late for even emergencies due to fear of getting COVID 19. As all the clinics are closed, we are observing quite a high number of patients with Stroke, Heart attack, gastro, diabetic and orthopedic emergencies are getting delayed intervention and recovery<sup>6</sup>. In a recent incident in Telangana, after many private hospitals refused to admit a pregnant lady fearing that she might be COVID infected, she finally found one place that took her in where she gave birth to a stillborn and she succumbed to death as well. The mother and child both could have survived if she got the treatment at the right time. So, people are thinking that, if they have emergency situation where they will go now<sup>7</sup>?

### Unavailability of government set-up during COVID 19 pandemic

As more than two months of lockdown, the closure of OPDs, clinic the patients have had to face the challenge of getting medical attention<sup>8</sup>. Many patients and relatives are getting problem by searching the government setup to get the emergency treatment, as the private hospital are ignore to take admission without doing COVID 19 test, this is creating panic among people while many patients are losing their lives. Maximum number of Govt hospital turn into COVID Hospital. People with low socio economic status are helpless as the private hospital cost is very high, which they can't effort.

### Impact of COVID 19 on Non COVID cases

Most of the private clinics closed by doctors due to non-availability of staff as they are fear of catching infection from patients. Maximum tertiary hospitals are restricted the non essential OPD voluntarily or according to government orders. If a person is suffering from Pain in abdomen, toothache, constipation, gastroenteritis then the person needs immediate pain relief. As more than half of the doctors are not available in locality the person cannot travel to far off places as police personnel stop them at every barricade and at times they are not convinced about their medical condition; even if the person is lucky to find a doctor and the doctor advice to do some blood tests and x ray, ultrasound, CT scan or MRI etc., the next phase can't begins because most of the diagnostic centers are shutdown. So actual diagnosis is not possible for that person

The situation has become really pathetic for both acute and chronic patients. For the renal failure and cancer patients need weekly or even biweekly treatments. But they are being refused by various centers on pretext of getting a COVID test first. Now getting a COVID test done is another difficult task because the result and reports are available at least 24-48 hours later. Due to this delay it may lead to death also.

Blood transfusion is most important for leukemia, anemia, thrombocytopenia and sickle cell disease patient but they are staying back from transfusion as the blood banks are running

dry. The people scared to go hospital to donate blood also blood bank can't organize blood donation camps in the hospital or field due to this pandemic situation<sup>9</sup>.

For the first time in its history, from March 24, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences shut down OPD services, including specialty, all new and follow-up registration and non-essential elective procedures and surgeries. Doctors at AIIMS and other hospitals from different states are currently providing tele-consultancy to all patients undergoing treatment at the hospital<sup>10</sup>.

Almost all over the country many hospitals have been marked as COVID 19 hospital. Govt should also think for some alternate facilities or hospitals to treat the emergency non COVID cases immediately, so that people will not find difficulty during emergency condition<sup>9</sup>.

## 2. Conclusion

As India rank is 7<sup>th</sup> on COVID positive cases, people should understand Corona is not going away anytime soon. This pandemic experience has taught us so far that COVID patients should be treated in COVID specific hospitals. That means rest of the hospitals, clinic, OPD, Operation Theater, diagnostic center should start their work back to normal position by using universal precaution. So that the patient with emergency situation will get immediate treatment. The hospital or clinic should maintain some guideline such as not over crowded in OPD, less visitors entry, use of mask, use of sanitizer, and maintain social distance, less social talk and faster payment methods, use of PPE kit by doctors and staff, daily screening of workers can be done. During the visit if anyone found suspicious should be immediately segregated. As Unlock 1.0 started in India from 1<sup>st</sup> June, all health care facility should open by maintaining the rules, so that there will no gaps in care of non COVID patient.

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