



Indian Medical Association

Kerala State Branch

**Protocols for Doctors &
Health care Providers at Workplace &
Public places**



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Preamble

Covid 19 pandemic has a huge impact on health, finance, social and political sectors in the world. As on today (15/07/2020), 13457458 cases are reported worldwide & 5,81221 deaths occurred. More than 32,000 cases are being reported daily. In India, there are already 9,36382. cases and 24309 deaths reported. Globally doctors and other Health Professionals were affected in a substantial percentage. One statistics shows that in Italy alone 20% of positive cases were doctors and other Health Professionals. In India more than 1300 doctors are infected and above 100 doctors are already dead. In Kerala also many doctors already got infected. About 5 lakhs of our own people from other states and countries have come to our state without proper testing. Number of COVID – 19 positive cases is increasing in an alarming way and community spread is imminent now. Symptom free positive cases are detected accidentally while treating patients for other ailments. Many room quarantine patients are wandering around and another about one lakh people from other countries and states, including from hot sports, will be returning to our state in the next few months. Death rate will also increase proportionately. One alarming situation is that many doctors and other health care providers are testing positive and many are forced to go on quarantine from both Govt. and private sectors following sentinel surveillance. Risk will be high for professionals working in Non Covid centers also since huge number of patients with fever, respiratory symptoms, pneumonia etc. are going to come during this rainy season. Many of these patients could be COVID -19 positive also but all of them can't be managed in COVID centres alone. Hence chances for contacting the disease by health care providers including doctors could be very high. Hence it is our personal responsibility to see that we are not getting infected with the disease.

1. Institutional Mechanism for preventing and responding to Health care Associated Infections (HAIs) among Health Care Workers (HCW)

Hospitals shall activate its Hospital Infection Control Committee (HICC). The HICC in the health facility is responsible for implementing the infection Prevention and Control (IPC) activities and organizing regular trainings on IPC for HCWs.

A Nodal officer (Infection Control Officer) shall be identified by each hospital to address all matters related to Health care Associated Infections (HAIs)

For preventing infection among doctors, they ensure that:

- i. Doctors in different settings of hospitals are using PPEs.
- ii. All doctors have undergone training on infection Prevention and Control and they are aware of common signs and symptoms, need or self-health monitoring and prompt reporting of such symptoms.
- iii. Provisions have to be made for regular (thermal) screening of all hospital staff
- iv. All doctors managing COVID – 19 cases shall be provided with chemoprophylaxis under medical supervision
- v. Provisions have to be made for prompt reporting of breach of PPE by the hospital staff and follow up action

2. Action for Doctor and other HCWS

- i. Ensure that all preventive measures like frequent washing of hands/ use of alcohol based hand sanitizer, respiratory etiquettes (using tissue/ hand kerchief while coughing or sneezing) etc. are followed at all times
- ii. He/She shall use appropriate PPE at all times while on duty
- iii. A buddy system, (that is two or more – person team is formed amongst the deployed hospital staff who share responsibilities for his/her partners safety and well being in the context of appropriately donning and doffing of PPEs, maintaining and hygiene and taking requisite steps on observing breach of PPEs) to be followed to ensure that there is no breach in Infection prevention control practices
- iv. Any breach in PPE and exposure is immediately informed to the nodal officer /HOD of the department

- v. HCWs after leaving the patient care units (wards/OPDs/ICUs) at the doctor's duty rooms/hostels/canteen or outside the HCF must follow social distancing and masking to prevent transmission to/acquiring infection from other HCWs who may be positive.
- vi. Pregnant/lactating mothers and immuno- compromised doctors shall inform their medical condition to the hospital authorities for them to get posted only in non- Covid areas.

3. SOP for health work force deployment during COVID – 19

3.1) SOP to be followed in case HCW exposure /breach of PPE

All the doctors must report every exposure to COVID – 19 to the concerned nodal officer and HOD of the concerned department immediately. The nodal officer will get the exact details of exposure to ascertain whether the exposure constitutes a high risk or low risk exposure as described below.

All health care providers including doctors having even mild symptoms showed be tested (Antigen test/Trunat test) for Covid - 19

i). *High risk exposure*

HCW or other person providing care to a COVID – 19 patient or health worker handling respiratory specimens from COVID – 19 cases without recommended PPE or with possible breach of PPE

Performed aerosol generating procedures without appropriate PPE
 HCWS without proper mask/ face – shield /goggles: having face to face contact with COVID – 19 case within 1 metre for more than 15 minutes

ii) *Low risk exposure*

Contact who do not meet criteria of high risk exposure.

The nodal / Head of the department will form a sub- committee to assess the level of exposure and the risk.

As per their assessment:

High risk contacts will be quarantined for 14 days, tested as per ICMR testing protocol, actively monitored for development of symptoms and managed as per laid down protocol.

If they test positive but remain asymptomatic they will follow protocol for very mild /mild pre- symptomatic cases. If they test negative and remain asymptomatic, complete 14 days quarantine and return to work. Should symptoms develop , follow the guidance para 3.2

Low risk contact shall continue to work. They will self- monitor their health for development of symptoms.

*3.2 SOP to be followed in case HCW reports symptoms suggestive of COVID -19

*3.2. (1) If any doctor who is manifesting signs and symptoms suggestive of COVID- 19, he/she will be isolated immediately and the following procedure will follow

- a. In case of mild/ very mild/pre- symptomatic case, he/she will have an option of home isolation, subject to the conditions stipulated in the revised guidelines for home isolation of very mild/pre-symptomatic COVID – 19 cases. Such cases would for home isolation as per timeline provided in the said guidelines.
- b. In case, where home isolation is not feasible, such mild /very mild/pre – symptomatic cases will be admitted to a COVID care centre.
- c. Moderate cases that require oxygen therapy shall be managed at a dedicated COVID Health Center Severe cases will be managed in a dedicated COVID Hospital

3.2 (2) Those who test negative, will be managed in non-COVID area as per their clinical diagnosis. Their resuming work will be based on the clinical diagnosis and the medical certification by the treating doctor

3.2 (3) For HCWs (with low risk exposure) who continue to work and develop symptoms;

And test positive , further management would be basde on their clinical presentation.

Those who test negative, will return to work subject to medical certification for ailment

3.2.(4) Discharge of COVID – 19 positive HCWs will be in accordance with the discharge policy.

3.3 Regular quarantine of doctors after performing duty in COVID – 19 areas Quarentine of doctors, other than what is stipulated above is not warranted

4. Personal precautions to be taken by Health Professionals

4.1). Preventive measures at Hospitals*

- * Follow universal preventive measures including proper use of N 95 or equivalent masks, frequent use of sanitizers, hand washing using soap and water.
- * Make sure that the OP surfaces is cleaned properly with sodium hypochlorite solution before and after starting the OPD
- * Social distancing should be ensured with patients to the extent possible and with patients attendants and others

- * Don't allow more than one bystander with the patient in OPD
- * Make sure that all people coming to the OPD wear mask
- * Make sure that preliminary screening for patient and bystander is done before they enter the OPD
- * Wear full PPE whenever you are examining a suspected covid 19 patient
- * Wash your hands with soap and water /sanitizers after examining each patient
- * Make sure that your co- workers also wear proper masks and wash hands regularly
- * Make sure that only one bystander wearing mask properly is there in room/ward during ward visits.
- * Limit number of OPD patients and allot timing to avoid crowding outside OPD
- * Avoid AC in consultation room or maintain temperature at 24 degree celsius
- * Ensure that the consultation room is well ventilated, window may be kept partially open and air exchange increased.
- * Strictly use PPE/theatre dress properly with additional protections during any surgical procedures and intubation
- * Do rapid Covid 19 tests for all suspected cases and before all elective surgeries
- * Provide adequate water and soap to patients and bystanders for hand washing before entering the hospital
- * Consider all patients and bystanders as potential covid 19 patients and take precautions accordingly
- * Refer all suspected and Covid 19 patients to Covid centers

4.2).*Personal Preventive Measures*

- * Proper use of N 95 masks, frequent use of sanitizers, hand washing using soap and water.
- * Keep safer distance from patients even while examining the patient.
- * Make sure that you wear quality mask and face shield while seeing patients.
- * Avoid touching and clothing of patients to the extent possible.
- * See that patients face is kept in other directions from you while examining the patient.
- * Wear full PPE whenever you are examining a suspected covid 19 patient.
- * Wear the mask properly and never touch the front side of your mask till you remove that.
- * Dont touch your eyes, nose or mouth till you wash your hands properly

- * Wash your hands with soap and water/sanitizers after examining each patients .
- * Avoid practice at home to prevent patient contact with older persons and children in family.
- * Take balanced diet, regular exercise and adequate rest.
- * Avoid touching hand rails, hospital walls and surfaces in common area.
- * Ensure personal hygiene while at home and work place.
- * In case you come across Covid 19 patients, volunteer for 14 days home quarantine. Stop seeing patients if you develop any symptoms of Covid 19, till you are tested negative or symptoms subside.

4.3) . *Preventive measures in common places* .

- * Ensure social distancing in common places.
- * Avoid places where there is crowding and no social distancing possible.
- * Avoid common transport vehicles as far as possible and use own vehicles.
- * Use masks properly whenever in public places.
- * Do not go out, if you have any symptoms of Covid19
- * Do not touch on surfaces in common area.
- * Use sanitizers/ soap and water on possible occasions.
- * Avoid visiting older persons unless necessary.

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