

Second Wave of COVID-19 in Pakistan: Our Responsibilities and Challenges as A Nation

The Corona virus (SARS-CoV2) pandemic initiated in late December 2019 in Wuhan city of Hubei, China, which has rapidly progressed involving more than 215 countries of the world. It was caused by novel SARS-COV2 coronavirus with Huanan seafood wholesale market as the possible point of origin. In past two decades, coronaviruses epidemic of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-COV) had 37% mortality rate and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-COV) had 10% affecting more than 10,000 population together. World Health Organization (WHO) declared it as the sixth Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) on January 30, 2020 and later on March 11, 2020, the WHO labeled it as a *pandemic*. The first case of COVID-19 from Pakistan was reported on 26th February, 2020 and has affected over 354,000 people with a mortality of over 7000 patients.

Many countries of the world have seen second wave of this pandemic. Government of Pakistan has also declared a second wave on October 28, 2020, after the rise in cases from 500 to 750 per day. Now it has crossed 2000 cases. The data released by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) shows that the current percent positivity rate is close to 3 compared to the previous figure of lesser than 2 making it a bigger challenge than first wave in Pakistan. The patients now presenting in hospitals are all in critical condition. Lack of a specific vaccine or antiviral drug and non-compliance to the standard preventive measures is the major reason of initiation of a second wave of this viral infection in Pakistan.

Being a nation we need to be responsible. Our country may go into economic crisis & our health facilities may choke. We have to understand how to live with this virus till the availability of vaccine or Curative antiviral drug. The Government of Pakistan is creating awareness in the public for the second wave as the situation of pandemic is getting worse. Smart lock downs are being implemented but people are not following preventive measures that are leading to infection spread at a very alarming speed. At the moment preventive measures are the only way to stop the spread of disease.

Preventive measures should be adopted to contain this deadly disease. Wearing masks, using hand sanitizers, washing hands with soap for 20 sec, keeping social distance of 6 feet are mandatory preventive strategies. Social, political, business, recreational and religious gatherings, should be avoided. Educational institutes should follow strict standard operating procedures. Most of the people in Pakistan are not considering this disease as a matter of serious concern due to unawareness, poverty, beliefs and lack of resources. People should ignore such disbeliefs and should start considering it as a great health concern. They should follow the preventive measures in true sense.

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