

COVID-19 Pandemic: Novel Coronavirus and Diabetes

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Dear Editor,

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) started from Wuhan, China in December 2019 and has spread like a tsunami across the globe within days. It has affected the population irrespective of race, religion, gender and age but people with immunocompromised states are more vulnerable to this viral infection especially diabetics, who face a longer length of stay at hospital and markedly higher mortality than patients without diabetes or uncontrolled hyperglycaemia, if counteracted with COVID-19.¹

This novel Coronavirus is highly contagious, but only a small percentage of cases develop severe illness and require intensive care treatment especially in case of diabetics. Yet the illness is so crippling that it badly affects the quality of life. Hence diabetes should be considered as a risk factor for a rapid progression and bad prognosis of COVID-19.²

Diabetic patients have more severe form of COVID-19 infection due to immunocompromised state and complications of diabetes. They are more prone to develop Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA), cardiovascular metabolic diseases, sepsis, respiratory and renal failure if infected with COVID-19. The cardiovascular metabolic disease is a great risk of developing the severe COVID-19 and the comorbidities can also greatly affect the prognosis.³ With on-going researches, more information will be available, to show a clear connection between the diabetes and COVID-19.

It is essential to develop strategies to protect diabetic population who is more vulnerable to acquired infections. This can be achieved only by taking preventive measures as well as improving the immunity of the diabetics.^{4,5} People with diabetes or other chronic conditions should be extra vigilant about protecting themselves from infection by having healthy eating, avoiding junk food and fad-diet, staying hydrated, regular indoor exercises, adopting the 'stay home, stay safe' policy, practicing social distancing, avoiding large crowds, frequent hand washing, avoiding touching eyes or mouth (the T-zone of face), wearing face masks in areas where COVID-19 is prevalent, staying up to date with vaccinations and regular follow up with their personal diabetologist /physician by using telemedicine opportunity.^{6,7}

The world has faced and dealt with three influenza pandemics in the 20th century, courageously. This emerging viral infection is new to the world though. However large-scale primary contributions are being made to understand the Coronavirus structure, genetics, molecular epidemiology, and pathogenesis. Owing to the advanced research modalities, improved diagnostic tools and multidisciplinary targeted treatment strategies, let us stick to this optimistic notion that this too shall pass.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None to declare.

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

None to disclose.

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