



Use of Proper Personal Protective Measures among Parents of Children Attending Outpatient Department — An Observational Study

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To the Editor: As we combat COVID-19, personal protective measures such as face mask, handrub, and social distancing [1] have established their relevance in preventing its spread. Most of the infected remain asymptomatic or suffer mild disease, which adds to the need for proper implementation of the personal protective measures. This study was conducted to know the extent of knowledge and adherence to personal protective measures among the attenders of children coming to the OPD.

We looked into the personal protection practices like followed by the parents on arrival into the hospital on 19th of October 2020. The study was done in the OPD of a paediatric tertiary care center and is a designated COVID treatment center. The increase in outpatients during the unlockdown phase served ideal for the study.

A total of 300 attenders were studied during this period. We found that 222 (74%) wore mask while entering the hospital. Of these 222, around 148 did not follow correct way of wearing masks. Erroneous methods include incomplete coverage, uncovering the mask during conversations, handling of the front part etc. The remaining 26% were made to buy and wear masks at the entry of the hospital. Out of 300 parents, 255 (85%) asked for handrub. The remaining did not ask for it but used when offered. Social distancing at the waiting area was followed by 258 parents (86%). A similar study done by Chen et al. among primary school students in Wuhan showed

42% abidance to hand hygiene and 52% adherence to wearing of face masks [2].

The attenders in the OPD were constantly reinforced the importance of proper wearing of masks, hand hygiene, and social distancing through scrolling messages in the TV screens, posters, personal explanation, and demonstration by the nurses. This is vital due to the asymptomatic carriers from whom there is an increased risk to healthcare workers (HCWs) for contracting the infection [3]. Consistent reinforcement also helps to dispel misinformation and conflict of ideas among the public. So it is imperative for all hospitals to have a constant surveillance of these simple measures which are indispensable tools to prevent COVID-19 infection until the availability of an efficient drug or vaccine.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of Interest None.

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