



ISOPARB E-RELEASE

“WHAT COVID HAS TAUGHT ME” A COMPILATION OF ESSAYS



Dr. Suchitra Pandit
President



Dr. Meena Samant
Secretary General

Vice Presidents



Dr Arup Kumar Majhi



Dr. Narayan Jana



Dr Gangadhar Sahoo



Dr. Shanti H K Singh

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(Lucknow)



South Zone
Dr. Rooma Sinha
(Hyderabad)



East Zone
Dr. Ojaswini Patel
[Burla]



West Zone
Dr. Parul Kotdawala
[Ahmedabad]

Dear ISOPARBIANS ,

I hope you all are doing well and staying safe .



COVID-19, has been with us since March 2020. Life has unfolded in this pandemic, and probably COVID has given us time to introspect and taught us about many things of life , our families, ourselves , religion and government , of which we were not aware of .

We have realized that staying indoors, working from home , hand washing , being safe, eating healthy food, some form of exercise and social distancing are important as they are the new way of life . Why were we then rushing through the crowded roads to attend conferences and meetings ? Yes , those of us who have to travel for essential services in the hospitals have to still go but safely .

We have no idea how long the pandemic will last but we have to make the best use of it . Infuse positivity , use of telemedicine for e-consults , use of digital media to interact with the world but for all this , a much needed change in behavior and attitude is needed . Though we are praying for people to be safe from Corona , for herd immunity or for the vaccine to be available soon . I am very happy that so many doctors participated in the Essay Competition 'What COVID has taught me'. All of them had written their own experiences, straight from the heart so I really felt each of them is a winner . But if a competition is announced there have to be winners but friends thanks for participation .

Prof. Dr. Suchitra N. Pandit
National President ISOPARB(2018-20)
President Organisation Gestosis
Chair AICC RCOG



Contributors

[In Alphabetical order]

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|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Dr. Alka Tiwari | dralka_bokaro99@yahoo.com |
| 2. Dr. Deepali Srivastava | deepalishrivastava70@gmail.com |
| 3. Dr. Gangadhar Sahoo | drgdsahoo@yahoo.co.in |
| 4. Dr. Madhu Sinha | madhusinha03@gmail.com |
| 5. Dr. Maya Modi Shah | pragnesh_2002us@yahoo.com |
| 6. Dr. Nivedita Datta | niveditadatta57398@gmail.com |
| 7. Dr. Pragya Mishra Choudhary | pragyamishra@hotmail.com |
| 8. Dr. Rita Kumari Jha | drritakjha@gmail.com |
| 9. Dr. Sukumar Barik | sukumarbarik1@gmail.com |
| 10. Dr. Sweta Singh | obgyn_sweta@aiimsbhubaneswar.edu.in |
| 11. Dr. Varuna Jha | varunavjha@gmail.com |
| 12. Dr. Vijay Lakshmi Seshadri | drvijayaseshadri@gmail.com |

A Doctor with a Covid experience

Dr. Alka Tiwari

Mob: 9304101963

It started when a friend having weakness visited my home. It happened that her home was infected with covid and she was an asymptomatic carrier and this I happened to know later.

At last Corona entered not through patients but the other way , from home where I let down my guards. I want to be specific with the details as I want the readers to have a clear insight about the encounter.

Day 3 After meeting her , I had a body ache.

Day 4 High fever

Day 5 No smell

I got alert and drove my car, took a PPE kit ,went for the test ,gave him the PPE kit to wear and got myself tested. Got a verbal confirmation that I was positive.

My first thought was a black blank. Now what.... It took 30 minutes for me to digest the fact and soak in the news. At home, my husband and children panicked.

I am a person who catches the present anyhow and looks ahead .

So I took things in my hands , organised my mind, fully covered while still driving my car. I came to my clinic, arranged for sanitization. Arranged for alternate care for my patients.

Now thoughts came about myself and the immediate future. Asked my sons to clear the outhouse which had a single bed, so that I could shift there to quarantine myself.

My results came as moderate severity. So like a woman getting ready for delivery I packed my bags with oxygen inhalers and got ready for the fight. Fortunately , the CT scan came normal, so I dropped the idea of admission and got quarantined in my outhouse.

My home was blocked with Bamboo, rest we didn't get any support from the government. My sons took charge of the home, they brought my food and drinks and I could see the feminine side of them now.

In a single outhouse room, with one table fan and a television and a mobile , I became a patient of myself.

Self injected on my abdomen, prescribed myself and took medicines myself.

Had oxygen, checked oxygen saturation.

Now about the primitive era in which I took refuge.

Some things reminded me of the untouchability of the previous era. My food and chai were provided that way from a distance.

I washed my clothes, cleaned my room and killed my time.

Missed my job, missed my patients. My mobile and TV couldn't entertain my soul.

Sometimes over the phone I prescribed medicines to other covid doctors.

With all this, the fear of death didn't occur in my mind. Perhaps that blankness without any external input also helped me in the recovery. Slowly things started getting better .

All my staff and even my maid were tested and all were negative. This covid stopped with me.

Now I am covid 19 negative, an experienced one, a self recovered one and can guide anyone to recovery.

Resumed duty. But the weakness is there, as I resumed duty the bubbiness is returning.

I waited for negative results to write this. Covid is the greatest Guruji of my life, taught me beyond any syllabus.

I wish my readers to take charge of their life, take the steering in their hands and drive and ofcourse stare back at it with rolling eyes.

What covid has taught me

Dr. Deepali Shrivastava
(Secretary, Lucknow Chapter
ISOPARB)



What Covid has taught me during this period is hidden in its name only.

C – Care

O- Observation

V – Vision

I – Independence

D- deeds

These six months of covid fear and corona crisis have taught us to be more compassionate towards the society and more careful towards ourselves. Apart from our regular chores, spreading awareness about the necessity of masks, social distancing and sanitization has become a part of our routine. Similarly, our concern for family, friends and society has increased to many folds. A single gesture of coughing or sneezing can take our concerns miles away.

How everybody's observation has enhanced in such a way that we have started being more aware of our surrounds as well as situation worldwide. Evidently, we observed, how basic preventive measures such as can actually help us stand against the virus which has no treatment or vaccine yet.

Similarly, my vision for how to combat the current agonizing situations has grown in other dimensions as well. Besides being a doctor, I discovered how my hobby of stitching can contribute passionately towards the endeavor of making home -made masks for the needy.

I have also discovered a few new insightful ways of how we can actually improvise on the already existing combating pandemic agendas.

How independent am I? With our heads proud and high, many of us lived in a false notion that we are perfectionists in our lives. This trifle virus, though with a potential to engulf the world in a single go, has actually shattered this false pride like a glass. With the helping hands of our house being snatched away, and no provision of any leave for the doctors, I realized what a super woman actually is. But being a boon in disguise. I really got to learn a lot of new recipes, and a few easy and quick ways to handle the house hold ventures.

Deeds (The KARMA) – What goes around comes around.

We homo-sapients at times falsely mistake ourselves to be the superior most and often forget that there is the invincible almighty and the nature possessing far more strength than what we cannot even imagine. These thoughts enhanced my belief in spiritualism.

Conclusively, I want to state, that this entire period of catastrophic occurrences, which has been heart rending for everyone has also left me quite terrified for the unforeseen future. Yet we should never lose hope and try to be positive. In spite of all these terrific situations, I have become more strong, curious, vigilant and spiritual. Paradoxically, I would like to state that we humans have strength and ability to fight against the biggest of devastations but not the smallest of existence like a virus. But as every wound heals with time, I am sure that we will overcome this situation in a much stronger state.

What COVID has taught me?

Dr. Gangadhar Sahoo
Vice-President ISOPARB
Dean
IMS & SUM Hospital



INTRODUCTION:

COVID is a Corona Virus Disease. The agent is the Novel Corona Virus. Both are my teachers, but ironically neither I have seen the virus nor the disease.

The virus has taught me the lesson from Bhagbat Gita that it is Omnipresent, Omniscient and Omnipotent. It has come down to the earth when the population explosion and the environmental depletion, the two demons which are almost destroying the creation of God i.e the earth.

It has come to this earth to punish the wrong doers, who are abetting the two demons.

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भव- ति भारत ।
अभ्युत्थान- मधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम्- ॥४-७॥
परित्राणाय- साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम्- ।
धर्मसंस्था- पनार्थाय सम्भवामि युगे युगे ॥४-८॥

“I am the tiniest of organism created by God, unseen, unknown and unpredictable. Nobody can kill me. I cannot be killed by change of season, sharp weapons, bullets nor even by nuclear weapons. I live in human body. When the body is dead I come out of it just like the soul.” - Corona Virus

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः ।
न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः ॥ २-२३ ॥

The lesson learnt from the tiny organism is that it can threaten the whole world, which has invaded 213 countries including the most powerful country United States of America. In India it has caused about 77,000 deaths out of about 48 lakhs infected. One can't underestimate the power of the smallest creation of GOD.

FAMILY REDEFINED :

One thing I learnt is “Family life redefined”. Earlier everyone was busy. Nobody had time to talk, relax, interact or take care. Life was mechanical and monotonous. Now with work from home, school and colleges closed, most of the family members are available at home. There is a breathing space now to interact with each other. Family love, emotion, attachment and relationship is felt now and for some it is a new feeling. It is surprising to see how young children adapt to the situation so nicely without any complaint.

TRADITION REVISITED

The virus reminds me the traditional values. The first thing it taught me is not to shake hands or hug but to wish with “Namaskar”, the traditional Indian style of greeting and welcoming. By this the social distancing guideline is followed.

Next thing it reminds me how my mother and grandmother were using veils to cover their face, father & grandfather using a towel (Gamucha) around their neck to cover their face (nose & mouth) in a dusty & mal-odorous atmosphere. Now the mask has replaced it.

It also reminds us how to maintain hygiene. Once one comes back after going outside like market & office one has to wash his feet, change the dress and clean it regularly. Before eating, touching any useful article or young babies one should wash one's hands properly. Meticulous hand washing has replaced that.

In the morning and evening daily we are lighting Agarbati, “Jhuna” & Dry Neem leaves while worshipping our God. Now Air sanitization has taken its place.

These are the few of the many traditional and healthy practices, which have revisited due to COVID.

SELF DEPENDENCY : Now with COVID, every human being is of the opinion that “Every person is COVID positive unless otherwise proved”. So families have denied their household helps, drivers to come for their work. This has made the family self dependent. For example in my family my wife is declared as the head of the family and in full charge of sanitation. My daughter-in-law is in the charge of the food and kitchen, son in charge of external affairs and I have taken the charge of supervision along with my office work. I have learnt how to make tea for me and for the family members. I have the honor of serving the bed tea to my wife. My grand-daughter a class IV student is busy in her online classes, and she extends her helping hand to everybody. At lunch and dinner we enjoy the gossip and humor. After many years I feel that family is a team, not a divided unit.

How to keep healthy ?

Covid -19 has taught us some healthy life styles which are made a habit. Vegetables & fruits are properly washed and sanitized before consuming. Frequent hand washing is mandatory.

Walking inside the campus, doing pranayam, yoga & meditation which I have never done before is a new healthy life style. These practices along with staying at home & using very often proper disposal of waste have made the environment clean.

At the same time we are taking extra care of elderly people and children in our family.

We are updating ourselves with new guidelines.

EVERYBODY IS EQUAL :

Putting on a mask makes all look alike . We are learning to express through our eyes. Mask has taught a great lesson that “Look to the heart not to the face” .

If somebody has misfortune of visiting a COVID hospital and the cremation ground one will learn the value of life. Everybody is equal on the hospital bed, ICU bed or even after death on the cremation ground. “First come first serve” is the principle. Priority is given to the high risk group and critical cases irrespective of their status, power, position and property. In the cremation ground one will feel dejected to see how the bodies of people after their death are being treated. It reminds me why Goutam Budha renounced the world. Today COVID is the Guru to teach everybody the surmons of Goutam Budha.

NECESSITY IS THE MOTHER OF INVENTION: I have experienced how we adopt and manage consulting others when the electricity is disconnected, computer goes out of order or when the essential items are exhausted. This crisis has taught me how to use computer, digital payments and online payments. I discovered “Amazon” as the Goddess of food and essential items in this crisis. We developed our self managed parlour and laundry. We have never thought that these things could have been done. Only Covid forced us to do this.

SOCIAL DIVIDE :

The Covid – 19 has taught me a great social lesson. Some people took it as an opportunity and earn a lot become richer and richer day by day. Whereas those who are without job, daily laborers, vendors become poorer and poorer.

One simple example I will like to give. Tablet Vitamin –C was costing less than one rupee before the Covid crisis. Once it was declared as a medicine to boost immunity against Covid, the medicine vanished from the market. When the next batch of Vitamin –C came to the market it was 8 times costlier.

Puzzled Physician :

Covid taught me that “ Medicine is a science of unpredictability and uncertainty. Since the etiology is unknown , pathophysiology is obscure, course of the disease is unpredictable, management is symptomatic. Thousand and one drugs are tried and discarded. Medicine has taken of full cycle. Now we have come back to nature. Nature is our ultimate hope.

History of medicine tells that it started with prayer, then herbs, then lotion, then tablets, then injection and now coming back to herbs and prayer in reverse order.

Masking

Distancing

Hand washing

Are the gold standard of primary prevention and early diagnosis and treatment is the main stay of successful outcome.

DIVERTING THE MAIN ISSUE

Story of “ stealing of a buffalo” is a bright example. One night two thieves stole a buffalo from a village. One thief removed the bell and with the bell ran in one direction. He went on ringing the bell to divert the attention of the people. The other thief ran away with the buffalo. The first thief after running a mile in the jungle threw the bell in the jungle and escaped. The villagers were fooled as they ran to catch the thief and buffalo in the direction of the ringing bell.

Here the analogy is :

Stolen Buffalo : Covid crisis with its other issues.

Bell : Susant Singh Rajput, Rhea & Kangana

Bell Thief : News Channels

The lesson taught by Covid is that people can easily be fooled by the news media to divert their attention from the main issue.

OPTIMISM BIAS

A word of caution for all of us.... as situation everywhere is worsening. Many are venturing to go out as many of us suffer from ‘Optimism Bias’.

We see people who are fed up of the lockdown and telling themselves that nothing will happen to them.

That's mainly because they haven't experienced any tragedy in their own family or circle.

This is Optimism Bias at play. It is the belief that each of us is more likely to experience good outcomes and less likely to experience bad outcomes. The key to optimism bias is that we disregard the reality of an overall situation because we think we are excluded from the potential negative effects. So, it's just a psychological trap, nothing else.

Remember a quote from Joseph Stalin :

“A million deaths is a statistic. But one death is a tragedy.”

It's like if we read the news that 10,000 people died, it doesn't affect us that way, as a single death of someone we know, does. Because when it's a single death, we get to attach the name, story and narrative of that person and feel emotional about it, but a million deaths is indifferent to our psyche. This is another psychological trap. So, the bottom-line is, that no matter how social norms are being relaxed, stay alert, cautious and extra vigilant, as if it's still an EMERGENCY, Stay safe and go outside only if it is must. And follow all the precautions without fail. Take extreme Care.

Do not be panic :

“ All things in life are temporary. If they are going well, enjoy them, they will not last forever. If they are going wrong, don't worry, they can't last long either.”

“ Worrying does not take tomorrow's problem ; It takes away today's peace.”

So the fear of the ghost of Covid should be expelled from everybody's mind. It is the fear that kills not the disease.

Conclusion: Every century, one pandemic visits this world. History repeats. It teaches but the human beings forget may be out of ignorance or arrogance. One thing is loud and clear that technological advances can't stand against nature. It is rightly said, “spirituality begins where science ends”. Our ultimate HOPE is the Almighty. I will not be wrong if I quote “ Bhagabatgita”.

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥
१९-६६ ।

Let us surrender before GOD, HE will take care.

What COVID has taught me

Dr. Madhu Sinha

MD, DGO, DNB

Mob: 8083076199 ,

Email: madhusinha03@gmail.com



What COVID has taught me

Posters, slogans, hoardings splashed all over the city giving messages about hand washing, sanitation , etc. people clad in face masks take me down the memory lane to my childhood days, when my strict grandmother would not permit us to enter the house without washing hands and feet and changing the slippers. Rules for the kitchen hygiene were followed by one and all. Fresh cooked simple food would be so mouthwatering. There was no junk or fast food or refrigerated food. Taking a bath everyday early in the morning was a daily routine. With modernization things have changed.

Initial few months of lockdown felt a little weird, a torture to many but then it dawned - we don't need too much to be happy. While building careers and earning money, we had forgotten the value of life, living an automated life, too dependent on machines.

A sedentary life sitting with laptop, smart phones or TV led to obesity and its various health issues. Outdoor games, yoga, meditation which was an essential part of the school curriculum kept us healthy. Morning walks by elders improved blood circulation. Even the daily household chores was a full body exercise.

The virus which has continuously been cursed all over the world but has actually done a favor to mankind - taught us to be content with basic things in life - food, family, home - gives security and happiness. Glitz and glamour no longer distract us. Unnecessary expenditure on many sets of dresses and shoes etc. is no longer important.

Our wise ancestor linked many things to religion and the common man followed it, out of fear of god. Worship of nature, like rivers, trees (especially peepal - Sacred Fig which gives humans oxygen), animals (especially cows) are wise ways to protect the environment. Modernization ruined many things, cutting of trees, overuse of cement and bricks, pollution due to factories, vehicles, overuse of plastics has led to multiple problems - lung and skin diseases, a hole in the ozone layer etc. The effect is not immediate, but it is disastrous when it happens earthquakes, landslides, floods etc.

People had support of family and friends in the thick and thin of times. The spices in our daily food boost our immunity and keep us healthy. Virus does not differentiate between rich and poor, caste, religion etc. All are equally vulnerable. Life has taken a 360° turn and it has given a new perspective in life. Everyone including males help in the daily household work, people get time to relive their hobbies like book reading, painting, sketching, gardening, watering plants, playing indoor games with kids - giving time to family create a feeling of security and love, taking care of aging parents.

True happiness is even at home and not necessarily leaving homes to fulfill their dreams - it has broken our ego. Happiness is not necessarily in a vacation in the UK or Paris. Misunderstanding get washed off when we sit together and chat. In the past mental illness, depression was hardly heard of. With little, one was happy and people had support of family and friends in thick and thin of time.

Nature knows to repair itself. Just in 3 to 4 months of lockdown the air has become so fresh greenery everywhere, chirping birds, decreased level of air pollution and even repair of ozone layer (scientist have confirmed). Oceans and rivers have cleaned up. Air quality has improved drastically.

We can count innumerable blessings bestowed on us. Being thankful is what COVID-19 has taught us. Value and respect of doctors has reemerged. Emergency patient can be cared only by them. Doctors are fortunate to be able to do **service above self**.

COVID-19 has woken us from a deep slumber. Nothing is permanent in this world not even our troubles. Life means struggle not fear. Life is fragile, one should learn to fight till the last breath.

Our ancestors coped up with the pandemics in the past. We are lucky to witness this and be part of this change. When we see people being laid off, getting salary cuts, GDP went down, people wanting one meal, our hearts goes to them.

People who lost their lives in this fight whispers in our ears, if you can't give love don't spread hatred. Don't know if we will ever meet again. We should be thankful that we are alive because we accepted the new way of living. Life is short, life is fragile, forgive quickly love truly, laugh, and never regret anything that makes you smile. Let us learn to live with this coronavirus.

HARD LEARNING'S OF COVID

Dr. Maya Modi Shah
Vadodara 9898085988

The return of the Pandemic after a century has hit the country like an atom bomb. Everything is gone haywire and it is like finding a needle in a haystack.

The fight, the plight the terrorism of it is unmatched to any other disease over a last 1000 of years. We all are panicking as one it is manmade, secondly no specific cure is there and the cytokines storms happening any time. So what do we know, nothing at all, 8 everyday new speculations are in the market.

It has spread like fire and affected the lives all over the world. The disease may be severe in 15% patients who need hospitalization, almost 85% recover without any specific treatment.

Today due to panic more number of patients is getting admitted to the hospital, and causing even the lack of beds. This leads to wasteful expenditure.

The home isolation is very important and pertinent today's time.

What is Covid-19

The covid-19 is a novel viral disease started in Wuhan city of China in Dec.2019. It is highly contagious, airborne spread all over the world.

This is a contagious disease and following are more at risk for Covid -19 infection

- Elderly people age 55 years and above
- Hypertensives
- Diabetics
- Cardio vascular disease
- Chronic lung disease
- Chronic renal disease
- Obesity
- Cancer patients
- Rheumatologic disease
- Pregnant patients
- Low immunity

The a) incubation period 5 to the days

b) Mode of spread

- Between people through droplets
- Fomites
- close contact
- Possible spread through faeces

Teachings of Covid-19

We have learnt many things since the covid-19 - All the forgotten old

- Social customs
- Norms
- Companionship
- Economy
- Care for each other
- Hygiene
- Empathy
- Care
- All family members assisting each other
- Homemade cooked food
- Fun with children
- Innovative ideas for children
- Keeping a cool balanced mind
- Eating less to be healthy and whatever is available
- No binge buying
- A vocation with a knock down
- Self-care
- Learn new passions
- Stuck to TVs
- New ideas for studying
- Online work
- Learning the computer
- Connecting to people through Facebook, internet what's app zoom
- New technology knowledge
- More Webinar online
- More time for your kids and husband and vice versa
- The forced vocation which was always in the mind
- Spirituality
- Meditation , training mind to be happy
- Yoga
- Fitness
- Health
- Compassion
- Staying as a closed knit family
- Wearing gloves
- Increasing family values
- Support to each other
- Maintaining physical distance
- Cleaning of vegetables and other good . Hand washing
- Cleaning all our surfaces thoroughly

We have learned all the signs and symptoms of covid - Fever, chills, sore throat, dry cough, loss of smell or test, diarrhoea, fatigue, myalgia etc

Warning sign

Shortness of breath, presence in chest, new confusion , unconsciousness , bluish lips

A chart engraved in our minds

Symptoms	Mild Fever, cough , cold body pain loss of smell, taste	Moderate Chest pain Shortness of breath	Severe Altered sensations shortness of breath
Respiratory rate	<24/min	24/min	>30/min
Pulse rate	60-100/min	24-30/min	>100/min severe tachycardia
SPO2 Blood O2 Saturation on level	>94% (room temp)	90-94% (room temp)	<40% (room temp)
CP severity score	<9/25	9-15/25	15-25/25

Physical distance in the house

- Increase in one's knowledge of the disease
- Everyone knows what happens and basic steps for covid-19
- Mask are in face-shield, PP Kit, boots, goggles, gloves
- Learning to take tantrums of the society towards the doctors.

Now let's say how the mind is diseased by the pandemic

- Fear
- Money crisis
- Job insecurities
- Increase in robbery
- Untruth tales
- Fights
- Clogging in the house temper
- Tantrums
- Mob crisis with police hitting back
- Over eating
- Drinking excess
- Disruption of thoughts
- Decreased understanding of covid-19. The blame game directed towards doctors
- Abuse, beating of doctors
- Panic attacks
- A vacuum in the self
- Thoughts - I am not going to be affected
- Suffocation in the house
- Selling daily needs at higher prices
- Tobacco abuse

There may be many more good and bad as always but in the end you have to be the winner. Search your soul. All this is because Covid-19 is a new disease where much is still uncovered and secondly no specific line of treatment with data are available. The fear of untold deaths spiking like the untouchability in the days of Gandhi (Achut), not to be able to see or touch your near and dear ones.

This is like when tuberculosis and HIV came into being. We had so many deaths due to tuberculosis, but now very specific treatments and investigations available which helps save lives.

There was a big hype when HIV came into being, but now the fear of it is lessened with knowledge and treatment.

Similarly with Covid-19 we are going to see better days with new hope and sunlight with a beginning of a new era. Everything needs a timer to heal. So with newer drugs and vaccine, the life of people will settle down. Happy good times with new thrust, thrives in our lives. Nothing is permanent in life. If you can manage this Covid all the battles in life are learnt.

Be cool and calm, realistic to a better tomorrow. Hopes will lead to aspiration and a new life.

Salutations COVID 19 (Global Teacher)

Dr. Nivedita Datta, Bokaro



Adversity is the best teacher, Overcoming challenges life throws your way, makes one a stronger and better person.

A microscopic virus came ,saw and conquered...and mankind was taken by surprise. But ,we didn't give up, slowly but surely we are crawling back.And in doing so, realisedour follies over the years of complacency.

Humanity was caught up in a rat-race, not realizing that rat-race was for rodents. Family, cultural values and even self took a backseat.

"What is life,if full of care,

We have no time to stand and stare"

Time was calling the shots.Little things that gave pleasure were replaced by big dreams. And we were chasing those dreams, because it was the expected norm.

And then COVID hit us. Life was at stake. Fear was palpable everywhere. And our priorities changed.

Compulsion made us housebound, with plenty of time, surrounded by family members, ,only home cooked food,, no soap operas and NO WORK.

Yet we were happy. Happy chit chatting, playing Ludo, trying new recipes...sometimes massacred the dish...watching movies together. Togetherness was the most happening thing, and we were happy. Surprisingly, patients, deliveries, OPDs,emergencies took a backseat. What I assumed as my life, my work, became secondary to the wellbeing of my family. My life before COVID era became an enigma.

Why was I besotted with my profession? Why did I ignore my kids in their formative years? Friends became an important aspect of my life...friends, not just acquaintances. Loyal shopkeepers reached utilities even in lockdown. People I took for granted rallied around. And those who just talked big, continued doing so, fruitlessly. And I learnt tech-saviness from my kids. Webinars, social media, Netflix, I started treading on hitherto unknown path, aided by my sons....my inabilities were a constant source of amusement.Our needs are less, its greed which is all encompassing. Small houses are easier to clean, we don't need a cupboard full of clothes.

Life is limping back to the preCOVID era. I am working long hours again, but with quantity and not just "quality "time for family. I have newfound respect for shopkeepers, sweepers and my extremely supportive staff. I take time off and have learnt to say" No means No"

COVID will come and COVID will go, but if we learn our lessons well, humanity will go forever.

What COVID Has Taught Me

Dr. Pragya Mishra Choudhary
MRCOG, PhD, DFFP, FICOG, FRCOG



Penning down straight from my heart.....

Almost every century has been a witness to a pandemic.....the Spanish flu of 1918-1920, the first cholera pandemic of 1817, The Great Plague of London of 1665, all of which have destroyed millions of lives and left colonies extinct. How were we to know that our generation would be a witness to the SARS Covid 19 of 2020 which has already affected 30 million people worldwide and caused a million deaths! How were we to know that a respiratory illness which originated as an isolated outbreak from the wet market of the city of Wuhan in China will turn into a pandemic of the millennium and cause upheaval in our lives! It hit us without a warning, came without an alarm, made us feel 'we are all one' and left us to speculate into the deeper meaning of life and left us to tell stories to our grand-children if we outlive the pandemic.

Man is a social animal and the lockdown in four phases put a halt to social meetings and gatherings, eating out and travelling which meant less of air pollution, seeing the plants grow and flowers blossom, seeing a blue sky in ages but at the cost of what ! It unfolded the misery of lakhs of migrant labourers who travelled hundreds of kilometers to reach their destination and thousands who perished due to hunger and exhaustion. I realized then, we are all the time running the race of earning our living, earning in abundance and struggling to fulfill our ambitions, which at times may even come at the cost of losing our morals and ethics and competing with colleagues and showing our superiority over others in the society. The unanticipated lockdown made me ponder, made me speculate, left me with a lot of ethical dilemmas.....is life all about building up my career, fulfilling my ambition? Is happiness all about being at the zenith of success? Can I not manage with less? Covid 19 taught me that there is a lot more to life than earning gold and silver and I do not need a lot of money to live and to be happy. I had been wasting money for years and I would have been happier with less and sharing the misery of others. It was the right time to re-orient my thoughts and actions with positive tweaks. I felt why be selfish and think of myself as an 'individual' when all of us, the rich and the poor, the black and the white are all sailing the same boat!

We are living in an unpredictable era. Forgetting to wear a mask, meeting a friend for a sit-down dinner, going for a stroll in the park or going out for shopping may all cost a life and you never know. So there is no better 'right time' than today. In the hustle and bustle of life did I ignore the children and the elderly, did I spend quality-time with my family or did I ignore the sentiments of my friends? Well.....then Covid 19 has taught me life is not worth living if I cannot find time for my near and dear ones as they are not immortals and neither am I. It is time to prioritize them, time to gratify my emotions and value the small things in life as even trifles can give you joy.

The unpredictability of Covid 19 has taught me to live my passion and to live life to the fullest! My passion is wellness of women and my hobby is treating the ailing women of society and this is the right time to give them time and show my empathy, leave an everlasting impression on their minds and these are something I ignored in the pre-Covid era. The Covid era has re-ignited my passion and brought out the best in me. I have become more digital savvy. Even in the odds of the hour I have learnt ways and means of updating myself with the advancements in the field of Obstetrics and Gynecology and have learnt to do things on the virtual platform like practicing telemedicine.

There have been times in the past when I have been hurt by people or they have made me a scapegoat but I thought to myself, isn't life too short to carry grudges and qualms against my peers and acquaintances. It is high time to learn to forgive and that's what Covid 19 has taught me. It is time to ignore the unnecessary and focus on my hobbies, enhance my skills and accomplish what I had envisioned.

Two months ago I myself was affected with Covid 19 and that too in its severe form. Something which seemed like a tale on television had gripped me and came as a jolt. Being admitted in the hospital, being in intensive care unit I was unsure of life with optimism and pessimism like a tug of war. I counted on my blessings and consoled myself by thinking that's what life had in store for me. That was the only way to be peaceful in the harrowing circumstances but I also thought that if I lived I would be a better person and also contribute my best to life. The uncertainty of Covid 19 disease taught me that life may not always be the way you've wanted it to be or be a bed of roses but take it up as a challenge, hope for the best but be prepared for the worst. Do not always think what life has given to you but always think what you have given to life.....life will be a better place to live.

Every cloud has a silver lining. The corona pandemic seems like a life-time experience and has taught me a lot of lessons in life and the change in me that seemed impossible have been impeccably achieved by the virus. So live life in its present and appreciate life to its fullest as it may overturn in minutes and seconds. The old proverb 'Health is Wealth' is especially so true in the Covidera and it is something which should not be ignored at any cost. Bad situations have to be envisaged and planning done accordingly so that better times can come. The pandemic which initially made us feel that the world has come to a halt has now taught us lessons while we combat it and move forward.

I end here with these lines of Robert Frost.....

'The woods are lovely, dark and deep, but I have promises to keep'

'And miles to go before I sleep and miles to go before I sleep'

What COVID Has Taught Me

DR. RITA KUMARI JHA

MBBS, M.S., PhD, FICOG

Ex. ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPT. OF OBST & GYNAE

PATNA MEDICAL COLLEGE & HOSPITAL, PATNA

President, ISOPARB Patna Chapter

Executive Member ISOPARB (2020-2022)

Executive Member POGS, Patna (2017-2018)

Life member FOGSI, ISOPARB, IMS, IMA

Published many articles in National & State Journal

Contributed chapter in books of FOGSI



To say that the Covid19 pandemic has changed everything is not an overstatement. Our way of living in general has been completely disrupted. This pandemic has been a great teacher and has not only taught us many new things but also redefined many of the older things we knew. Here is what COVID-19 has taught me – from A to Z.

Adaptability is the word that deserves the first mention. The pandemic has brought about an entire paradigm shift in the way the world has worked so far. The only way to survive and thrive in this new-normal is to adapt – one's thought and actions. We have had to change everything, our work, our routines, our food and even our relationships.

Balance has become ever so important with the blurring lines of physical distinction. Locked in our houses, we have to work, cook, eat, play, entertain and sleep, all in the same physical space. To maintain order, we need to allocate our time and space cautiously to each task. This balance was hard to arrive at, but once achieved, has helped us settle in our new routines.

China has been blamed for the spread of the disease. India has been particularly aggressive in distancing itself from China and we have played our small parts by clearing our phones of all Chinese apps.

Doctors, have finally been recognized as the heroes they deserve to be. Not just us doctors, but nurses, caregivers and the entire healthcare support system has stepped up as frontline warriors against this invisible enemy. While others shunned the outside world, our doctors risked their lives, stayed away from their loved ones and relentlessly fought to give us a chance.

Elderly have been in the high-risk category with a high percentage of fatalities. This has made me even more careful as I belong to this high-risk group. We are trying to ensure that our exposure to the world is limited, even at the cost of interactions with our own families.

Family has finally gained the importance it deserves. We have always known that it is family that stands with you through thick and thin and this pandemic has made us all realize this all over again. Spending time at home has helped us bond more with them.

Gatherings have become a strict no-no! Celebrations have been muted and missing special occasions has become acceptable. The great Indian wedding has been ignored for a more private affair. Even funerals call for only closest relatives now.

Handwashing has been officially recognized as one of the three pillars of combating this virus. By now we all have inculcated this practice as a habit and this should go a long way in lifting personal as well as social hygiene to the next level. As a result of this basic hygiene, the instances of other diseases have drastically reduced.

Indoors is the new outdoors! As our world shrinks to our houses, we have turned to innovative ways to engage ourselves. We are finding time to reopen our old hobbies and trying our hands at new skills. Books, music, painting, cooking, we have found new love for these old favourites. The simple pleasures that we enjoyed in our earlier days are being found once again.

Jobs, unfortunately, are being lost. This has been one serious issue that many people are dealing with. The scenes of mass-migration of our workforce not only tugged at our heartstrings but also made us appreciate our own lives that we have so often taken for granted.

Knowledge and information have become important tools of preparedness for all of us. Information related to the virus, its spread and the precautions to be taken is available on social media and this awareness has helped us stay safe so far. However, the nuisance of misinformation and half knowledge has also exploded, and many lies are being spread to mislead people.

Leadership has had a huge impact on handling of this pandemic. The people at the helm of affairs have made the difference between high and low spread of the virus. While some countries have successfully reduced the spread of Covid19, others have struggled and driven their countries into health crisis.

Masks, the second pillar of the war on the virus, have gradually been inducted into our daily wardrobe. It is heartening to see that not wearing masks is being frowned upon and people have realised the importance of wearing the same. From scarcity in the initial days to a horde of choices available today, masks are here to stay.

Nature has been the biggest beneficiary of this pandemic. With a complete halt of industrial activity and travel, instances of flora and fauna thriving in unlikely places came to light. The exploitive relationship between humans and our planet was very apparent when we saw how nature returned to its rightful place as soon as humans withdrew. Perhaps a humbling message for us humans that the earth will do just fine, even better, without us.

Online Conferences have replaced the traditional meetings and seminars and remote education has gradually found its place in our lives. We overcame our initial struggles with technology and are now actively engaging with each other through webinars and videoconferences. Technology, has also brought in innovative techniques to make these interactions interesting and fun.

Phones have become our man-Fridays. During this pandemic, the mobile phone has cemented its place in our lives. Webinars, conferences, emails and even online consultations and advices – all readily available in the palm of our hand.

Quarantine is a new word that has crossed over from medical to general vocabulary. Whether it is institutional quarantine mandated by the government or home quarantine as a precaution, it has been an important factor in controlling the spread of disease.

Restaurants are being missed dearly. The experience of enjoying a meal prepared and served by professionals without having to worry about cleaning up the mess later is now a vague memory. On the flipside, this has probably been the longest that we have eaten healthy, hygienic, homecooked meal on a daily basis.

Social distancing comes in as the third pillar of the Covid19 fight, one that still needs a lot more work, especially in a crowded country such as ours. Avoiding unnecessary interactions with other people altogether and maintaining a safe distance during necessary interactions is a simple-sounding instruction that our population has found very difficult to follow. However, it is in the best interest of all to learn and practice social distancing as early as possible.

Travel plans were cancelled this year and perhaps over a good part of next year too. However, while we have merely lost a few opportunities, the travel and hospitality industry has lost so much more. Restart of travel is one of the primary reasons why we are eagerly waiting for the pandemic to pass.

Understanding, care and compassion was exhibited by many of us who donated willingly, in a hope that some needy family benefits from it. Stories of selfless help from every corner of the country helped restore our faith in humanity.

Visiting friends and family has been reduced to need basis only. In fact, not meeting them is now considered an act of love. The urgency of visiting malls and buying things has greatly reduced and we have learned to live with the basics.

Work from home, which was considered a luxury for a fortunate few, became mainstream especially for the private sector. Doctors continued to go to work but others gradually accepted WFH as the new normal. Work from home has also translated to 'work for home' with all of us doing housework in the absence of maids and cooks.

X-mas, Diwali, Dussehra and Chhatt are all around the corner, but it is evident that the festivals this year will not be as bright as always. There will not be elaborate pandals, or breath-taking fireworks. This year we will learn to have modest celebration with our close family.

Yoga fits this situation perfectly. With minimal equipment requirement, yoga offers an inexpensive route to fitness for all ages. Moreover, yoga also offers de-stressing exercises which has further added to its popularity during these trying times.

Zoom, Zomato, Meet, Netflix, Prime and many more apps have eased the hardships of the lockdown. Need groceries delivered at your doorstep? There is an app. Want to have a video conference? There is app. Want to watch your favourite film? There is app. Want to learn Yoga? There is an app!! Technology has shown its true benefits during this crisis.

The horizon of normalcy is not in sight. Yet we continue holding on to hope and faith. The list above is a tribute to that undying human spirit that refuses to bow down and perish but rather creates a new normal even in adversity; thus, bringing us back to the first word on the list – Adaptability.

One must change to address the inevitability of change.

What COVID Has Taught Me

Sukumar Barik
68/8 Purnadas Road
Kolkata - 700029
9831086392

sukumarbarik1@gmail.com



Introduction

Covid, a five letter acronym coined by World Health Organization on 11th February 2020 entered our life in an unprecedented and surprising way. Never before in recent times have we seen a common discussion topic for days and nights for the last six months, all over the world. The concern, the fright, the scare made us equal. A scared, helpless human being.

Very small, but not so beautiful

This small, very small, very small virus surprised everyone. So, small is not always beautiful. Some small may be nasty; some small can be deadly. Do not play with those , don't ignore them either.

Nature needs care

Our speed of industrialization and urban development had unfortunately lead to indiscriminate destruction of nature. This ruthless exploitation of nature has lead to global warming and climate change. We should globally take appropriate action quickly; otherwise something devastating is knocking at the door. Some talk had taken place , but the action is not taken appropriately . Some blame game still is on , but decision makers have to understand the urgent nature of the problem. Wake up please.

Nature is beautiful. Few days of 'Lockdown' (another dreaded word) has shown us beautiful blue skies, fresh healthy air. Birds are singing, dancing at the window side. Flowers blooming in an unprecedented way. What a mind freshening , soothing thing to watch this wonderful nature. Feel like really a different world.

Meaning of holiday

It has taught me that actual holiday need actual work. Just having no work does not mean a holiday. Staying away from workplace or just staying at home is not a holiday.

How little we need in life?

I really have been pleasantly surprised to find out how little we really need in our personal life. I realized how many unnecessary clothes I have purchased just for that. How many times have I unnecessarily had food from outside home. The wardrobe is laughing at me sometimes.

Need of a hobby

I realized the need of a hobby or hobbies in these difficult times. It was the time for creating many writes ups which I wanted to do for a long time. It also gave me the time for finish writing the scientific papers after a long waiting period. How many stories have been written and published! And scientific papers too! Promotion! Yaah!

Reminder of inadequate health infrastructure of the country

This difficult time has exposed the inadequate health infrastructure of this country. The need for increased allotment in health budget is long overdue. The short term, medium term, long term measures has to be decided upon and then implemented in a systematic way without any center-state so called divide.

Migratory labour

The data showing nearly forty crore people are migratory laborers is distressing. There is urgent need for clear data of such needy people, so that they can be provided direct help to tide over current distress and also to plan for their future work and livelihood. How many lives do we want to be scarified before we wake up? Let the politics run its own race, but administration can do the job efficiently. We do not have dearth of intelligent, skillful, efficient, honest people in our country. We only need the will to do it.

Being close to family

Never before have we had so much time to spend with our family. It improved discussions, it improved communications, and it improved relationships. On the contrary it is very distressing to find out the reports of domestic violence in this country. This needs a deep introspection into our social structure. Problem of senior citizens has surfaced very clearly. We have to address this in a clear and definitive way; otherwise it will be real social nightmare soon.

Webinar – good, bad and ugly

We knew in twenty-first century we have to embrace digitalization. But now it is the way of communication. We want it or not that's a separate issue. It is here. We are taking classes for students, taking examinations virtually. Getting used to it gradually. But we still miss the classroom teaching. Clinical teaching now really becoming a problem. We have to manage in the future with simulations or other innovative methods.

The tsunami of webinars is unprecedented. Needless to say, some are really interesting. Attendances are noteworthy.

Personal contact

All virtuals are virtual. We are human being. I really miss to see the face. I really miss the smile. I really miss the hug. Pray to almighty, to meet all of you soon physically (without so called physical distance), see your smile (without the mask) and hug you dear ISOPARBIANS.

Waiting eagerly for that. Please tell me "it's soon".

What COVID Has Taught Me

Dr Sweta Singh
Additional Professor,
Department of Obst and Gynae
AIIMS Bhubaneswar
Phone: 9438884131



Email: obgyn_sweta@aiimsbhubaneswar.edu.in

Introduction:

At the 9th month into the COVID-19 pandemic, it is cathartic to write what this new pandemic has taught me-something like the labour pains, that releases a new life after all the trials, tribulations, reflections, pain, wins and losses. So, here is what I think I learnt from the COVID -19 pandemic:

Value of and for freedom:

After 7 decades of having attained freedom from the British rule, we surely had taken our freedom for granted:

- Freedom to go out at any time of day or night
- Freedom to travel anywhere in this world
- Freedom to get together with friends and family
- Freedom to wear what we want and
- Freedom to do what we want.

Suddenly, due to the lockdown of COVID and measures to contain the ubiquitous virus, there were a host of regulations to curb this freedom:

- Can't go out at night (night curfew)
- Can't go out during the weekend (weekend lockdown)
- Passes to explain your movements (lockdown and containment zone restrictions)
- Cant travel in your own country (rail and air travel restrictions)
- Can't travel out of your country (international curbs and restrictions)
- Cant get together with friends and family (avoid close contact, avoid loud conversations, avoid distance less than 1 metre)

The value of freedom, and the respect for freedom...I have never felt more before...**When we are prisoners in our own homes!**

Nature heals itself and us all:

The years since my childhood have been filled with the imagery of nature having been exploited by mankind. I have vivid memories of reading about ozone depletion, water pollution, soil pollution, air pollution, noise pollution.

Suddenly, during COVID times, lo and behold! We have images of the Himalayan peaks being visible from 200 km away, ozone layer healing itself, flamingos being found in hundreds off Surat and Mumbai, lions and deer roaming freely in Chandigarh ! Nature sure healed itself while we, the people and exploiters were indoors. It is also a lesson that I learnt that if we humans go beyond a point, **nature has a way of healing itself**. This in turn, is a sight for sore eyes and for our children, a greener planet!

Hope keeps us going:

The pandemic has seen us go through stories and real life experiences of people, friends, colleagues and loved ones turning COVID positive. Who can forget the images from Italy of healthcare workers facetimeing the near ones of seriously ill patients on death beds or of the ethical dilemma of allocating beds and ventilators (the ones with the best chances of survival get the bed or the ventilator)!

And amidst the gloom and uncertainty, we carry on...Carry on with our lives, duties and responsibilities, with the belief that there is hope-hope of the pandemic simmering and ending some day and the unfolding of a new tomorrow!

This hope keeps me going-when we can be free again and things can be normal. John Lennon in the cult song 'imagine' had said decades back

"You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one" (John Lennon, Imagine)

Work is worship:

Working in a tertiary care institute where daily my getting out of home means making a difference in someone's life, including that between life and death, **"work is worship"** is a renewed realization for me during this pandemic.

While some people have the comfort of working from home, that is a luxury that we doctors and health care workers just don't have! Do we want it? Maybe not! Probably, it is more difficult to work from home, what with kids around, cooking and cleaning. To be able to maintain a routine on a daily basis and have a purpose in life makes me feel grateful for my work. Yes, there are challenges. Yes, health care workers are increasingly succumbing to the virus. Still, the purpose in life that work gives is unparalleled.

Love and support of family and friends for resilience:

Well! Decades had passed, since I had spent some unadulterated and blissful time with my birth family. We are 4 brothers and sisters, all married now, gainfully employed, with extended and expanded families across 5 cities, 3 countries and 2 continents. Given the difference in timezones, for all of us to connect at one point of time used to happen only during weddings and/or vacations (once in two years). Given work from home for all my brothers and sister, to reconnect via whatsapp video calls on Sundays is pure bliss! I look forward to my 9:00AM Sunday family online meet time, away from my responsibilities- to share some jokes, stress and feel whole again with all the laugh and the banter.

it does to me? Makes me resilient. Resilient to the stress and new challenges that crop up everytime during the pandemic. To see and talk to all during the weekend, when we are not that hard pressed for time and deadlines, makes me want to give the love back- back to people I deal with, colleagues, patients and society.

Conclusion: To conclude, the ongoing pandemic has challenged us at all fronts. However, amidst all this, we have devised our own ways of coping up. What COVID has taught me is this :1) value for and of freedom 2) Nature heals itself and us all 3) Hope keeps us going 4) Work is worship and 5) Love and support of family and friends for resilience. Cheers for a better tomorrow!

Picture: Taken by me during the COVID-19 pandemic



Picture legends:

A: Empty highways-People are prisoners in their own homes
B: Nature heals itself
C: Beautiful nature-A sight for sore eyes

D: Work is worship
E: Family love creates resilience
F: Value freedom

What COVID Has Taught Me

Dr Varuna Verma, MD



Dr. Varuna Verma has done her MD in obstetrics and gynecology from RIMS, Ranchi. Presently she is working as a consultant in a private hospital. She is interested in Laparoscopic Surgery and USG. She has presented papers in AICOG and local conferences. Besides, she likes writing stories and blogs and gardening.

We have two lives, and the second begins when we realize we only have one.”
Confucius

It's ironical that Covid 19, that had its origins in China, brought forth in full force, the quote above by the great philosopher again from China. The SARS 2 or Corona Virus disease or Covid 19 made us realise in no uncertain terms that we have just one life.

There were two aspects to this disease, one was the devastation caused by the disease itself the severity and rapidity of which along with its pandemic nature has not been seen in recent memory. The second was the lockdown which greatly curtailed the social and all other interactions with fellow human beings. The full impact of which remains to be seen.

So what has the last few months taught me or us? Or belied a few gospels.

The first head to roll of course was that of human arrogance. All the human race prostrated in its full glory in front of a semi living, unseen virus. That was lesson number one for all of us, the complete fallibility of human in front of nature. Respect nature. Earth may be a better place without us.

In the first few weeks all of us were mesmerized by the clear blue sky, which we were seeing after ages. We heard the news of pandas' mating and Himalayas being seen from my childhood town Jalandhar with wonder and amazement. And that was the lesson number two, nature heals itself fairly quickly if humans don't interfere. Do whatever you can to facilitate it.

This also made many of us think why we need to be on the roads so often? The companies world over are thinking about work from home being the new normal. On the personal level, it made me realise all that can be done from home and how much time we waste on the road while travelling for work, for conferences, for shopping, or kids going to school. Of course as a travel bug, I learnt that I should be travelling for the sake of travelling not as a compulsion.

One of the greatest shock that came to medical professionals is that there's no holy gospel. Everything and everyone from WHO to scientific publications in reputed journals came under scrutiny. That was a professional lesson for me, weigh every truth that's put forward as such on your own previous experience, experiences of your seniors and simple common sense.

These tough times also taught me to value my relationships, things that I sometimes took for granted. As I lost people closest to me, I realized there's only one life. I clung desperately to the remaining one and you will find me in every Google meet, every zoom get together.

This was also a time to introspect, how much is too much? What are the things that matter most to me? Prioritise those, so I learnt playing ludo all over again, cooking, tending to plants, spending more time with family and children. And my lost love of reciting poetry to my children as I learnt to say no to the patients. As I say this, I must confess that if we don't do anything, it's never for the lack of time but for the lack of initiative and willpower.

One of the most poignant images of the times were hordes of daily wage earners returning from metropolitan areas to their villages and towns. People not in thousands but in lakhs who walked thousands of kilometres to their destiny. At the same time, people from all walks rose above their daily existence to help those in need. Ok, virus you may have killed in thousands but you can't hold human determination and spirit to ransom. On my low days, there's a lot of inspiration to be taken from these .

And it would be a gross miss if I don't mention how much I have learnt from the webinars and conferences of all hue and shades. Usually I could attend just two or three conferences in a year, now it's almost those many in a week though I have been guilty of missing many. I have also become more tech savvy.

Every day, as the cases continue to rise around us, we learn to protect ourselves and our staff while still dispensing medicines to the affected patients. We have learnt to tiptoe on a fine line not to attract government's fine for crossing some weird regulation which might change in a few days anyway and still do what we are needed to do.

So we are learning every day. As my fellow doctors are falling everyday while the mortality amongst the common people who don't take many precautions remains very low, we have to learn a lot till we can say we have learnt all.

What we have learnt without doubt, is we have just one life, make the most of it till it lasts. Enjoy!

What COVID Has Taught Me

DR VIJAYALAKSHMI SESHADRI , CHENNAI



Covid has acquired a maligned name of having shaken off the entire world, of having brought discomfort to everyone's living and of having been responsible for a disturbed health status of millions in this universe. Undoubtedly, for all those of us who have survived this war against all odds, with several uncertainties, it is still a challenge every day. Perhaps each one of us have been at the receiving end in varying dimensions and have countered or accepted it in various proportions. I am sure we are left with no choice, but to look at it as a learning experience with lots of mixed memories that would linger on with us till our end.

Human race is rated as the most superior, empowered with all skill, will and power to influence other living creatures –the plants and animals. But now, don't we realize that we are not invincible? And, sometimes we have to accept the might at the other side and build up greater defences.. this is a humbling learning point.

We have always exercised liberty on our movements and activities but here we are, compelled to restrict, and we are getting used to it and perhaps slowly accepting it as a way of life. So we learn that contented living is within ourselves, and, change in attitude is a welcome move!

The need for social distancing has erected some barriers in mixing with people, but wise as we are, we learn and adapt to the alternative methods of keeping the rapport and relationships in high esteem.

Visiting aged parents as frequently as possible is now replaced by the high tech virtual meets. Adapting to the hard restrictions on mobility and sincere attempts to keep them safe and healthy is the hard core reality, and, is appreciable to them as well, looking forward to a favourable turn over as and when possible. Optimistic attitude is the essence of life!

Watching several near and dear ones, going through illness and death is heart breaking always, and this viral affliction is no different. Perhaps it has made us stronger in emotional control, in accepting the nebulous pattern of life and death, and praying for peace and eternity.

An enormous change has come into the practice of our profession and we are learning every day, the hard way, to pursue our goals and practices of doing full justice to the graceful profession we are in, and to leave no stone unturned to express kindness, sincerity and perfection.

We have now more time at our disposal, and with mental stability, exploring all the available resources and avenues to further our dreams of skill development and hobbies, I think I am now more suited to accept partial retirement from the busy work pattern which we have maintained for decades.

So, though we were not prepared to go through these challenges, I have definitely looked at the other side of the coin, inculcated into myself, more patience, greater abilities, deeper tolerance, higher optimism, better humanity, appreciable simplicity, stronger stability, and more delicate humility.

Through the lens of Dr Barik- before Covid - During lockdown



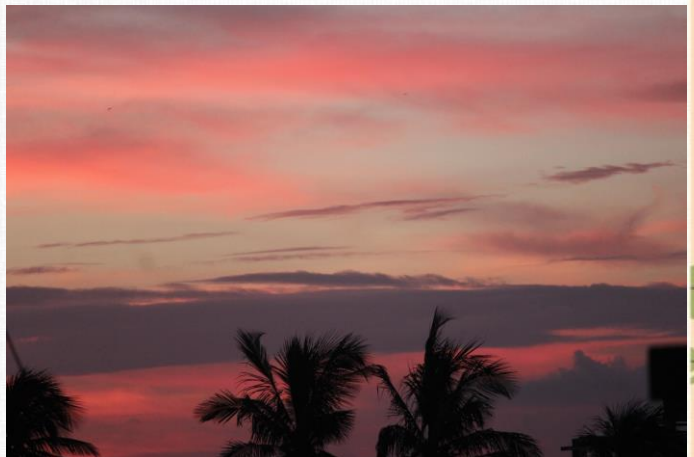
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