



Covid-19 Pulse

A Newsletter on Healthcare Conversations

Threat of Comorbidities during COVID-19



Image Source: The New Indian Express

The upheaval caused by the pandemic has thrown light on a more pressing issue that India has been grappling with for decades. That is, its non-communicable disease (NCD) burden. An analysis of Tamil Nadu health bulletin revealed that out of 921 people who died due to COVID-19 in the state, 54 percent and 43 percent had comorbidities such as diabetes and hypertension, respectively. Doctors say that people should make appropriate lifestyle changes and undergo regular tests for blood glucose and oxygen levels.

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Policy Matters

Are we compromising on data privacy by using contact-tracing applications

The ongoing COVID-19 situation is the first public health crisis where data collection through contact-tracing applications by the government seek to leverage technologies, big data, and algorithm-driven decision-making. Countries that have high app-penetration, witnessed a case growth rate reduction post the introduction of the app. However, it is difficult to quantitatively ascertain the spread of the virus using these apps now and another critical issue is of data safety. India's Arogya Setu app scored two out of five in parameters set for protection indicating weak data safeguards.

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Coronavirus Cases

	Confirmed	Recovered	Deaths
India	2,040,261	1,386,452	41,792
Global	19,308,441	12,397,744	718,592

*Figures as on 7 August, 2020

Digital Conversations- Social Media

"While health has often been viewed as a cost, the first coronavirus pandemic in history has shown how critical health investment is to national security. And universal health coverage is essential to our collective global health security"-
[@DrTedros](#) #COVID19#HealthForAll

World Health Organization (WHO)
[@WHO](#)

At least 10 state govts have capped the pricing of #Covid19 treatment while patients continue to report exorbitant bills by pvt hospitals. Only a strong & comprehensive regulatory response can reduce medical bills in India & put #PatientBeforeProfit .

Oxfam India
[@OxfamIndia](#)

Role of private manufacturers is critical while strengthening healthcare infrastructure

The pandemic has upended health systems worldwide. This is an opportunity for countries to transform their healthcare facilities, especially for India that ranked 145 among 195 countries on Healthcare Access and Quality Index in 2016. As per a public health specialist, PR Sodani, to strengthen India's healthcare industry, there is a dire need of maximising synergies between public and private manufacturers in the country. To efficiently battle COVID-19, the country needs to increase trained and skilled workforce in contact tracing and encourage people to use telemedicine and e-health that will promote remote healthcare facilities.

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Insight



Why is it too early to believe that Oxford vaccine is a success story?

COVID-19 vaccine progress is laudable so far with over 150 academic institutions and companies undergoing trials in different parts of the world. India, home to almost a fifth of the world's population is playing a critical role in developing a vaccine against coronavirus. So far, we know that Pune-based Serum Institute of India has received DCGI nod to conduct last-stage human trials for the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine candidate. However, there is no proof of the vaccine being effective in older or a more vulnerable cohort.

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On the Global Front

Do not re-open schools, Israel's advice for other countries

In late May, confident that it had won the COVID-19 battle, Israel reopened schools. Within days, infections were reported at a Jerusalem high school, which mushroomed into a second wave of coronavirus cases in the country. A virus that rippled out of a school, soon reached students' homes, to other schools and neighbourhoods affecting hundreds of people. As per experts, there is a need to take precautions when reopening schools and the process must be gradual, with certain limits.

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