

Let Us Fight Together against COVID-19 Pandemic

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The message is loud and clear from World Health Organization, COVID-19 is a pandemic and everybody needs to play a part.¹ It has reiterated the message; speed up the preventive measures, disaggregate the crowd, encourage social distancing, quarantine and protect yourself and the community with case detection and appropriate treatment measures. We need to learn, internalize, set priorities and act very quickly and vigilantly to flatten the contagion curve with the pieces of information from China, Italy and all over the globe before the outbreak overwhelm our healthcare services. Developed countries with advanced health infrastructure and screening facilities have not been able to cope with the disease outbreak. It is not an issue of a single nation now, we need to fight together to win the war against this pandemic.

As of April 9, almost more than 85,000 people have lost lives particularly in Italy, Spain, United States, China and all over the globe.² The danger is slowly looming towards South-East Asia where the medical infrastructure is not well-developed and preventive measures are difficult to implement out of several constraints. It gets even worse with lack of medical supplies, improper administrative management and delayed responses from the government. As of April 9, nine case was reported from Nepal, with first case reported in January 24.^{2,3} We have already moved to stage of community transmission and our window for preparation is slowly closing. However, it would be a wrong decision to wait for disaster to come and fail to make attempts to control after we have learned so much from the outbreaks elsewhere. The Government of Nepal has already decided to close down places where there is possibility of public gathering and encouraged people to use safety measures and self-quarantine at home till the situation falls under a controlled stage, which may be few weeks from now onwards. Efforts are being made to shut down cities and reduce movements while enabling only emergency services to operate with cautions, leaving all non-essential services closed.⁴

The government has also made a plea to the public to not to use routine hospital services unless absolutely necessary. However, this is still not enough if the public fails to comply with self- quarantine, isolation and social distancing. Much of the measures to control the spread lies in the hands of the general public who need to continually be encouraged for handwashing, using personal protective equipment (PPE), sanitizers and avoid public gathering and crowd where the transmission is possible. Use of personal protective equipment needs to be standardized, properly used only by frontline healthcare worker who training also needs to be ensured. Surrogates of PPE should not be encouraged in expense of safety of frontline worker, and government needs to ensure the quality and adequate supply before the outbreak. Vulnerable elderly population and people with multiple co-morbidities and high risks need to be specially cared for as the mortality rises rapidly. Struggle for providing adequate quality ensured testing kits and separate facilities of critical care services for fulminant cases is still a challenge in all health facilities. We need to be more innovative in a short duration of time and use locally available materials and infrastructures before the problem escalates.

It is a welcome move that scientific community has broken boundaries and shared contents related for prevention, control and management of COVID-19 pandemic even to communities where accessibility of content was difficult. World Health Organization has made updates of scientific development accessible along with another scholarly committee to combat the deadly virus.⁵ Pooling of data from all around the globe has made it easier for developing nations to meticulously interpret the spread of virus and make timely decision for their community.

It is obvious that a state of panic may ensue within a community with false data interpretation, poor media coverages as well as when the appropriate measures and equipment's are halted or diverted at time of confusion.

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A state of honesty and ethical standards for reporting cases in the national and international directories can help academicians interpret the true picture and make appropriate decisions for all. The best possible way to combat the situation lies in the hands of general the public with strict adherence to self-quarantine at home and good infection prevention practices. Timely, aggressive case testing and detection strategy, and management of suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases from the government side needs to be well-coordinated and managed all over the country.

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