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RESEARCH ARTICLE

MISCONCEPTIONS & ACTUAL FACTS ABOUT COVID-19 – LEARNED AFTER 100 DAYS OF PANDEMIC

Dr. Shubh Karmanjit Singh Bawa^{1*}, Dr. Parul Sharma¹, Dr. Pankaj Chauhan¹, Dr. Vikas Jindal²,
Dr. Divye Malhotra³, Dr. Shamsheer Sandlas⁴, Dr. Ajitpal Singh Bharaj⁵ and Dr. Rohit Saini⁶

¹Post Graduate, Department of Periodontics, Himachal Dental College, Sundernagar. Himachal Pradesh

²Professor & Head, Department of Periodontics, Himachal Dental College, Sundernagar. Himachal Pradesh

³Professor & Head, Department of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery, Himachal Dental College, Sundernagar, Himachal Pradesh

⁴D.M.D, University of British Columbia, Vancouver. Canada

⁵Senior Resident, Department of Orthopaedics, Bharaj Lifecare Hospital & Trauma Centre, Hoshiarpur. Punjab

⁶Senior Resident, Himachal Head & Neck Hospital, Hamirpur, Himachal Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

As Mark Twain put it “The trouble with the world is not that people know too little, it's that they know so many things that just aren't so.” Human history experiences a very strange period in which an unseen adversary struggles; the novel Coronavirus disease - 19 (COVID-19). Originally observed in the Wuhan, China and now spreading rapidly all over the world. The Current COVID-19 pandemic threatens the medical community with several theories. Because of its higher rate of transmission, the clinical and epidemiological findings of COVID -19 remain vague. On COVID-19, their understandings are expressed from every corner of the world but the meaning of those understandings is still uncertain. It is therefore crucial to know the truth, and to free the perceptions of human. Hence the review describes the COVID-19 misconceptions and actual facts.

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INTRODUCTION

Coronavirus disease 19 or COVID-19 was first identified in December 2019 and was confirmed in Wuhan, China¹⁻². According to WHO estimates, it has now spread quickly in too many nations, becoming a global pandemic, affecting 9,473,214 people worldwide and causing 484,249 deaths as of 26th June 2020³. By imposing a nationwide lockdown, India has curtailed the spread of this virus to a certain extent; however, the total number of reported cases has crossed 490,401 with approximately 15301 deaths and these numbers continue to rise³. The pandemic of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) is the world's greatest threat and public health issue since World War Two. A possible route of transmission between humans is by airborne droplets, touching or bringing into contact with an infected person or a contaminated surface.

The suggested specimen forms for Covid-19 diagnostic testing include nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal swabs. To avoid the spread of COVID-19, we are urged to follow certain precautions by the WHO and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Meanwhile, there's a lot of information coming out about the Coronavirus every day, but there's a lot of misconceptions too still in the wake of the pandemic. In this Prospective we will discuss about the misconceptions spreading among society and social media.

Misconceptions & Actual Facts about COVID 19

Corona virus is manmade: This is a misconception that began to spread across media platforms claiming that the Coronavirus did not arise spontaneously but was created in China and the United States (US) laboratories to use it as a biological weapon.

Fact: It was an unsubstantiated story which has no credible evidence. Both Chinese and US scientists have denied the

*Corresponding author: Dr. Shubh Karmanjit Singh Bawa,
Post Graduate, Department of Periodontics, Himachal Dental College,
Sundernagar. Himachal Pradesh.

theories mentioned above. Researchers have established that the virus evolved from bats and was transmitted to humans, and it is now spreading from person to person. Though the evidence is clear the misconception is continuing to spread.

Alternative treatments can fight Coronavirus: remedies such as consuming garlic, drinking water every 15 minutes, taking vitamin C, applying sesame oil to your body, using essential oils, colloidal silver and steroids help people fight corona virus.

Fact: Though the garlic has some antimicrobial properties, coronavirus does not prevent it. Vitamin C can only help enhance immunity; whereas Colloidal silver may damage the kidneys and cause seizures. However, there is no evidence of such alternative therapies being able to defend people against modern Coronavirus.

Face masks can shield you from the virus: The common people can guard themselves against newly transmitting Coronavirus by wearing the surgical mask and N95 mask (medical masks).

Fact: Studies of influenza, influenza-like disease and human corona viruses indicate that the use of a medical mask will avoid the transmission of infectious droplets from an infected person to someone else and the possibility for environmental contamination through these droplets⁴. There is limited evidence that wearing a medical mask by healthy individuals in the households or among contacts of a sick patient, or among attendees of mass gatherings may be beneficial as a preventive measure⁵⁻⁸. However, there is currently no evidence that wearing a mask (whether medical or other types) by healthy persons in the wider community setting, including universal community masking, can prevent them from infection with respiratory viruses, including COVID-19. Lastly the use of medical masks in the community can create a false sense of security i.e. neglecting other essential measures, such as hand hygiene practices and physical distancing which can result in touching the face under the masks and under the eyes, leading to unnecessary costs, and removing masks from those in health care who need them the most, especially when masks are in short supply⁹. Examples of where the general public should be encouraged to use medical and non-medical masks in areas with known or suspected community transmission are shown in Figure 1⁹.

Situations/settings	Population	Purpose of mask use	Type of mask to consider wearing if recommended locally
Areas with known or suspected widespread transmission and limited or no capacity to implement other containment measures such as physical distancing, contact tracing, appropriate testing, isolation and care for suspected and confirmed cases.	General population in public settings, such as grocery stores, at work, social gatherings, mass gatherings, closed settings, including schools, churches, mosques, etc.	Potential benefit for source control	Non-medical mask
Settings with high population density where physical distancing cannot be achieved, surveillance and testing capacity, and isolation and quarantine facilities are limited.	People living in cramped conditions, and specific settings such as refugee camps, camp-like settings, slums	Potential benefit for source control	Non-medical mask
Settings where a physical distancing cannot be achieved (close contact)	General public on transportation (e.g., on a bus, plane, train)	Potential benefit for source control	Non-medical mask
Settings where physical distancing cannot be achieved and increased risk of infection and/or negative outcomes	Vulnerable populations: • People aged ≥60 years • People with underlying comorbidities, such as cardiovascular disease or diabetes mellitus, chronic lung disease, cancer, cerebrovascular disease, immunosuppression	Protection	Medical mask
Any setting in the community*	Persons with any symptoms suggestive of COVID-19	Source control	Medical mask

Figure 1. Areas where to use medical and non-medical masks.

1. Application of disinfectant on the surface of the skin:

Chemical agents such as disinfectants, bleach, chlorine, 75 percent ethanol, acetic acid and chloroform can destroy viruses on surfaces.

Fact: However if your body comes contact with virus already, applying certain substances on your skin or

under your nose won't destroy it, although it can be dangerous. Also, these chemical disinfectants should not be ingested.

2. Heat and cold will kill the virus:

Coronavirus cannot be transmitted in dry, humid, snowy and cold weather areas.

Fact: There is no reason to suggest that new Coronavirus or other diseases can be destroyed by cold weather. World health organization (WHO) says that the COVID-19 can be transmitted in all areas, including areas with hot and humid climate¹⁰. Moreover the average human body temperature stays around 36.5 ° C to 37 ° C, irrespective of outside temperature or weather conditions. The most effective way to protect yourself from the current Coronavirus is by wiping your hands regularly with alcohol-based hand rub or washing them with soap and water¹⁰.

3. Hand dryers kill Coronavirus:

Hand dryers kill new Coronavirus effectively.

Fact: The hand dryers aren't really effective at destroying the virus according to WHO, the hands must be scrubbed using an alcohol rub or washed with soap and water¹⁰. Upon washing, hand drier is used to dry the hand.

4. Ultraviolet disinfection lamps are effective in killing the COVID-19 virus.

Fact: Ultra-violet (UV) lamps should never be used for hand disinfection or other skin areas. In addition, UV radiation can irritate the skin and harm the eyes¹⁰.

5. The virus can be transmitted via mail or package:

it is unsafe to receive a packet or letter from the infected region.

Fact: According to WHO, the reception of parcels and products from impacted COVID-19 areas is perfectly secure. There's very little risk of an infected person contaminating consumer products. Likewise, there is also a unusual chance of receiving the virus that triggers COVID-19 from a shipment that has been transported, driven, and exposed to various temperature and conditions.

6. Getting COVID-19 is a death sentence:

Coronavirus (COVID-19) can kill those infected with the disease.

Fact: The majority of people who acquire COVID-19 could recover and cure the virus. Moreover, COVID-19 is only fatal for around 2% of people. When one has the disease, steps should be taken to ensure to control the symptoms. If they have cough, nausea and breathing problems they should seek medical attention early but first they should call their health care provider. Thanks to supportive treatment that most patients recover.

7. There's a COVID: 19 cure vaccine available – Pneumonia vaccines can protect people from new corona virus.

Fact: There is currently no effective vaccine for this virus. Pneumonia vaccines such as pneumococcal vaccine, and type B (Hib) Haemophilus influenza cannot provide safeguards against new Coronavirus. It will take months to produce a vaccine which is safe and effective for humans. Researchers are still trying, with support from WHO, to create a new COVID-19 vaccine.

8. Antibiotics kill Coronavirus:

Antibiotics are effective in preventing and treating the new Coronavirus.

Fact: Antibiotics are intended for bacteria; there are no antibiotics which can kill viruses. The hospitalized COVID-19 patients receive antibiotics as they have the risk of co-infection with bacteria.

9. The Coronavirus can be transmitted by mosquito bite.

Fact: There has been no knowledge or data to date suggesting that mosquitoes could spread the latest coronavirus. The new coronavirus is a respiratory virus that spreads primarily through droplets generated when coughed or sneezed by an infected person, or through droplets of saliva or nose discharge¹⁰.

10. Thermal detectors can diagnose Coronavirus: Thermal scanners are being used to identify those individuals who are COVID-19 infected.

Fact: Thermal scanners are efficient in finding people with fever (i.e. having a temperature greater than usual in the body). They cannot identify people who get COVID-19 compromised¹⁰. The causes of fever are numerous.

11. New Coronavirus may be spread by pets: SARS-CoV-2 is a zoonotic virus which spreads to humans from animals. Pet animals are also one of the sources of Coronavirus spreading to humans.

Fact: The truth is, it's the other opposite route; dogs may be vulnerable of catching the virus from people. Several dogs and cats (domestic cats and tigers) in contact with infected humans have tested positive for COVID-19¹¹. No evidence suggests the animal would be able to infect humans. The CDC advises that people with COVID-19 will have someone else to look after their pets. COVID-19 is mainly spread through droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or speaks¹¹.

12. Restrain breath for 10 seconds: If you can hold your breath for 10 seconds or more without coughing or feeling discomfort, you are healthy.

Fact: The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are dry cough, tiredness and fever. Some people may develop more severe forms of the disease, such as pneumonia. The best way to confirm if you have the virus producing COVID-19 disease is with a laboratory test¹². You cannot confirm it with this breathing exercise, which can even be dangerous¹².

13. Breast feeding: Mothers that are COVID-19 compromised should not breastfeed their infant.

Fact: A woman with COVID 19 should be advised to breastfeed safely according to the WHO. Moreover, close contact and early, exclusive breastfeeding helps a baby to thrive. A mother is fully supported to Breastfeed safely, with good respiratory hygiene; Hold your newborn skin-to-skin, and

Share a room with your baby. One should wash your hands before and after touching your baby, and keep all surfaces clean.

14. If you have Coronavirus, "you will know "

Fact: No, You're not going to. COVID-19 is responsible for a wide variety of effects, many of which arise in many respiratory illnesses such as influenza and common cold. Principally, typical COVID-19 symptoms include fever, cough, and breathing problems and rarer symptoms involve dizziness, nausea, vomiting, and a runny nose. In extreme cases, the disease may develop into a serious pneumonia-like disease but early on people infected may have no signs at all.

Officials have now warned the public to brace for an outbreak which means that those who have not travelled to the affected countries or have made contact with people who have recently travelled may begin to catch the virus. If one stay in an infected area and have high fever, fatigue, lethargy or shortness of breath or underlying disorders and milder

symptoms of the disease, they should seek medical treatment in the nearest hospital.

Conclusion

Globally, disease transmission is increasingly growing, as well as misconceptions and misunderstandings are still spreading around the world. It is important that one must be knowledgeable of all the relevant information. The reality is sure to set one free.

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