

PHYSICAL DISTANCING AND HYGIENCE PROTOCOL.

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ABSTRACT

The current outbreak of the novel coronavirus also known as COVID-19 was declared as a public health emergency by the WHO where over a million people have been affected by the disease with over 50000 deaths till date. Physical distancing is a method to minimize crowd interactions and prevent the spread of disease within groups of people. This is a common practice which has been carried out over generations to minimize the spread of virus by limiting its reproduction rate (R0) among communities. Even though the emphasis on behaviors of hand-washing and mask-wearing was repeated during the pandemic of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), not everyone paid enough attention to this. A descriptive statistic was used to make sense of the status of hand hygiene and mask-wearing among the peoples. The article focuses on how social distancing and physical distancing has been used to deal previous pandemics globally, the hygiene, the issues that needs to be addressed to tackle the COVID-19 threat.

KEY WORDS: Awareness, Covid-19 pandemic, WHO, Social distancing, Physical distancing, Quarantine, Hygiene

INTRODUCTION

Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) which was first detected in early December 2019 in Wuhan, China is a pandemic that has taken the world by storm. As of May 31, 2020, it has affected 5.93 million people and resulted in more than 367,000 deaths globally (WHO 2020). The pandemic has succeeded in striking fears across businesses and individuals across the globe as well as horrified medical practitioners in the world. Despite the pandemic stabilizing in China where it was reported to have started from, other countries throughout the world especially United States Of America (USA), Spain, Italy and France are having serious challenges in controlling the pandemic. With over 1,720,000 confirmed cases and over 104,000 reported dead cases as at April 11, 2020 (WHO 2020).

As the number of cases of Corona virus or Covid-19 disease increases day by day every country aggressively move towards the community transmission stage of the disease. In the days ahead the number of cases, the number of affected lives and the community impacted to increase significantly. While the spread of Covid-19 can no longer to be stopped, but can definitely slow it down. As of 8 June 2020, the coronavirus disease 2019 (covid-19) pandemic has been responsible for more than seven million confirmed cases worldwide, including more than 400000 deaths. In many countries, healthcare facilities have been overwhelmed by a surge in cases, especially patients requiring intensive care. In the absence of evidence for effective treatment regimens or a successful vaccine, the most pragmatic recommendation has

been to advise physical distancing (referred to by some as social distancing) to minimize person-to-person transmission with a view to flattening the epidemic curve. The main aim of physical distancing is to prevent more rapid spread of covid-19 and to allow more time for public health and healthcare services to become better prepared for the prevention and management of the disease. Although most countries have implemented some policy interventions aimed at physical distancing (eg, closure of schools, workplaces and public transport and cancellation of public events). Two recent studies from Wuhan, China and Hong Kong reported a reduction in the number of confirmed cases and transmission of covid-19 associated with physical distancing policy interventions. Therefore, Some Governments and businesses have locked down their countries and restricted movements in their quest to combat the pandemic. Some Universities, government institutions as well as businesses have been tasked to work from home.

Individuals with covid-19 will develop common symptoms like fever, cough, sore throat, aches and Pains but the severity of the symptoms will vary. Some individuals might not show the symptoms at all but still be active carriers .In fact in 80% of the cases people will only experience a mild version of the disease, while another 20% will have severe symptoms leading to hospitalization . Only 2% of the overall infected population is potentially going to deal with fatal consequences . By comparison. SARS had 15% fatality rate and Ebola 50%.

Corona virus appear to be significantly more contagious then even the flu virus. Current evidence indicates that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted through respiratory droplets or contact. Contact transmission occurs when contaminated hands touch the mucosa of the mouth, nose, or eyes. The virus is significantly more resistance and can spread through coughing or sneezing. It takes 5-6 days before the individual start to feel sick and the symptoms starts to show but it is already starting to spread to other peoples even if he is feeling healthy and that's why the virus has been able to spread across the globe so aggressively and the reason that WHO of finally decided to call it a pandemic.

The virus can also be transferred from one surface to another by contaminated hands, which facilitates indirect contact transmission. Consequently, hand hygiene is extremely important to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. It also interrupts transmission of other viruses and bacteria causing common colds, flu and pneumonia, thus reducing the general burden of disease.

OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to assess knowledge, awareness and hygiene practices regarding covid-19. Also to understand that physical distancing helps to decrease or interrupt transmission of COVID-19 in a population by minimizing contact between potentially infected individuals and healthy individuals, or between population groups with high rates of transmission and population groups with no or low levels of transmission.

Also study about Good hygiene which will help to prevent spreading germs to other people and prevent illness. Non-pharmaceutical measures like wearing face masks, washing hands, keeping personal hygiene are important to reduce the risk of virus.

STATEMENTS OF THE PROBLEM

Social distancing comes with psychological fallout. Experts warn prolonged isolation during the pandemic may worsen or trigger mental health problems. As increasingly stringent measures to keep people apart are put in place to slow the spread of the coronavirus, mental

health experts are warning that losing everyday social connections comes with psychological costs. And those costs could go up the longer such measures drag on.

In response to the accelerating pandemic, a growing number of states have banned all nonessential activities and asked residents to stay home. Across the country, colleges and offices have gone entirely online, schools and restaurants are closed and nursing homes are barring visitors. Such social distancing can stop, or at least slow, the spread of COVID-19, the disease caused by the new coronavirus

But “for some people, a lack of social connectedness feels as impactful as not eating,” says Joshua Morgan Stein, a psychiatrist and disaster mental health expert at the Uniformed Services University in Bethesda, Md.

Research on the psychological toll of social distancing during epidemics is limited. But a review in the March 14 Lancet provides some clues. Researchers evaluated 24 studies looking at the psychological outcomes of people who were quarantined, an extreme form of social distancing, during outbreaks of SARS, H1N1 flu, Ebola and other infectious diseases since the early 2000s.

Many quarantined individuals experienced both short- and long-term mental health problems, including stress, insomnia, emotional exhaustion and substance abuse. Of 2,760 quarantined people, 34 percent, or 938 individuals, reported high levels of psychological distress, which can indicate mental health problems such as anxiety and depression, during the outbreak compared with 12 percent of non-quarantined individuals.

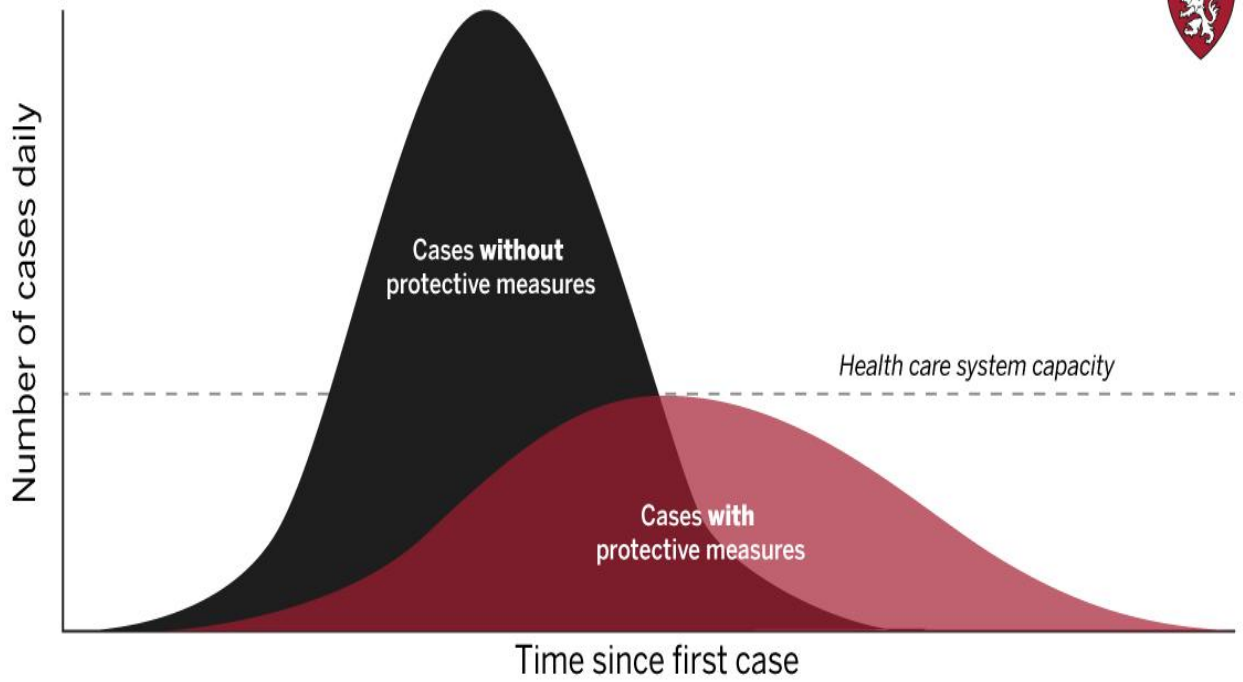
Some children and young people may be feeling more isolated, anxious, bored and uncertain. They may feel fear, and grief, over the impact of the virus on their families. Too much cleanliness may be causing us to develop allergies, asthma, inflammatory bowel diseases, and other autoimmune disorders.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study has adopted a quantitative research method, this study gather information through the well-structured questionnaire designed for the study on the prevalence of coronavirus disease(covid-19)symptoms, hygiene and social distancing behavior. The questions are asked about the health and health status of individual as well as family. Questions are also asked about coronavirus symptoms, testing, physical distancing behavior in house, their mood and emotional state and work status. This survey has not taken more than 10 minutes to complete. The survey rendered 719 responses. Each and every individual were included in this survey.

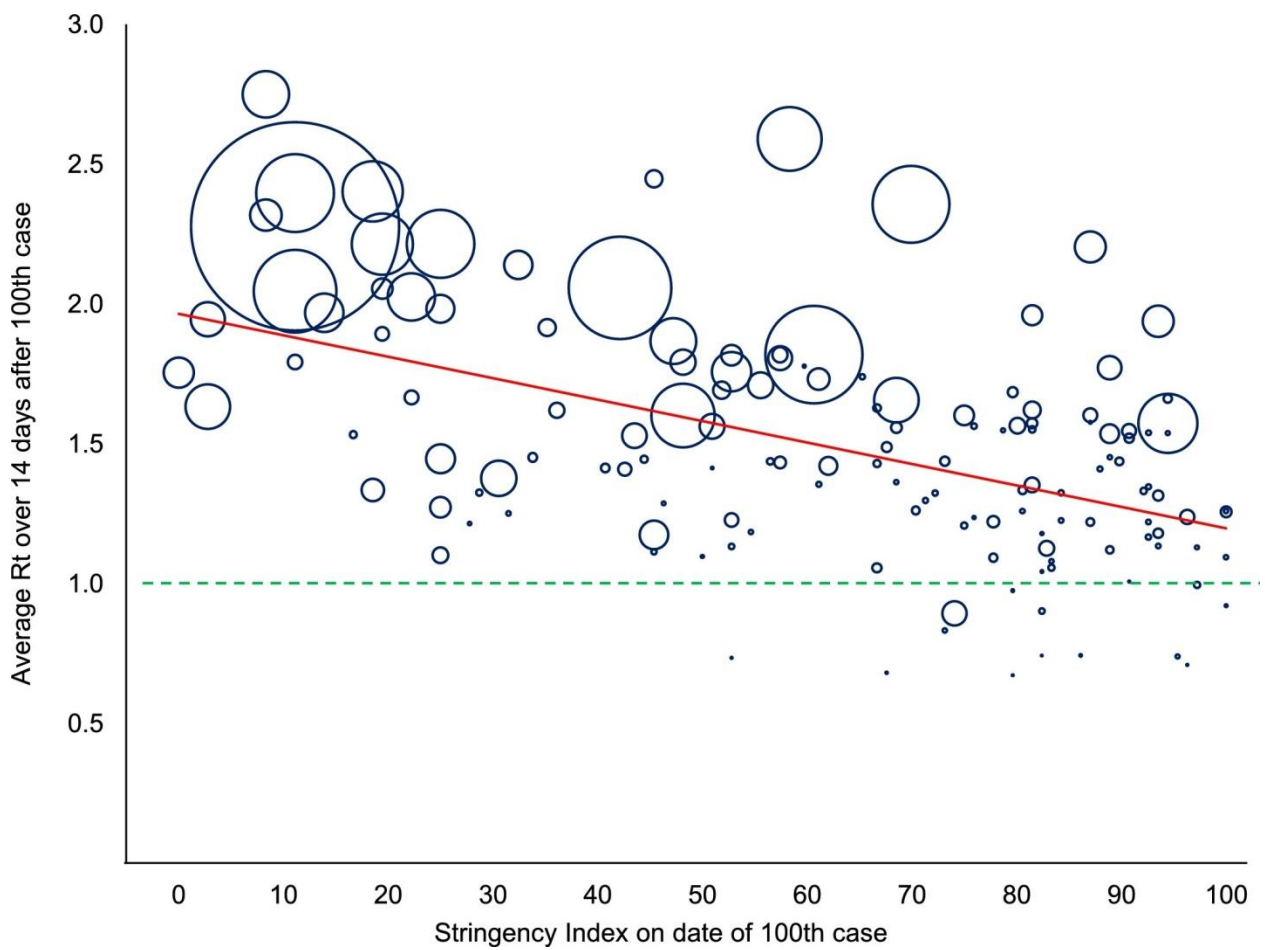
RESULT

According to the World Health Organization and the CDC, social distancing is currently the most effective way to slow the spread of COVID-19.



source: CDC

A new analysis of COVID-19 data in 58 cities showed that for each day's delay in social distancing, a coronavirus outbreak lasts days longer.



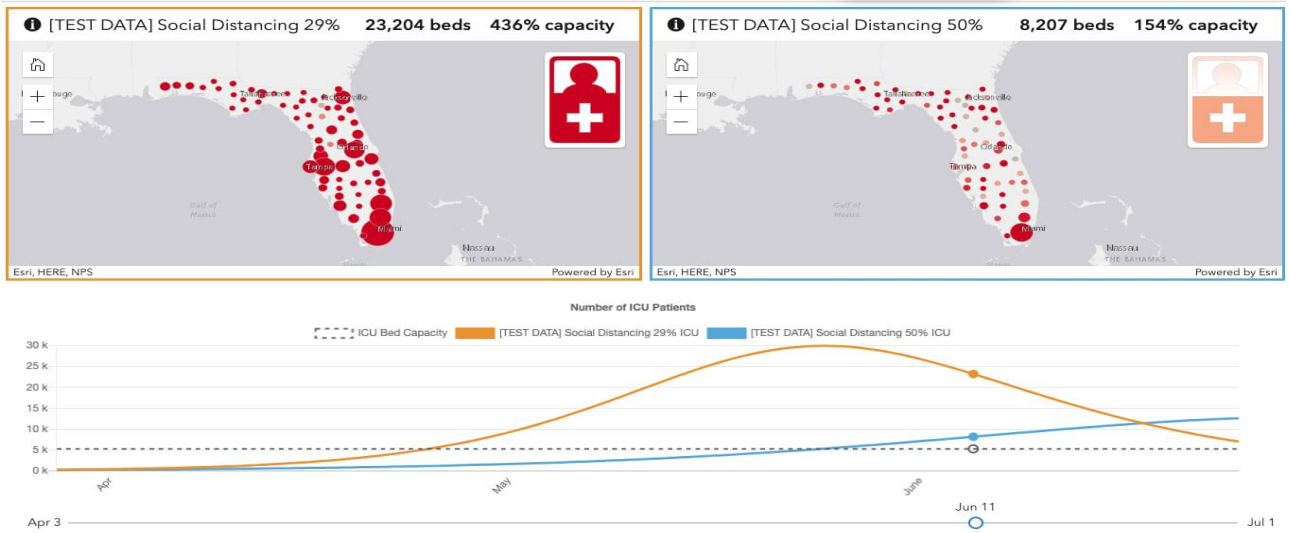


Figure 1 Stringency index of physical distancing measures on the date of the 100th case and average reproduction numbers in the following two weeks.

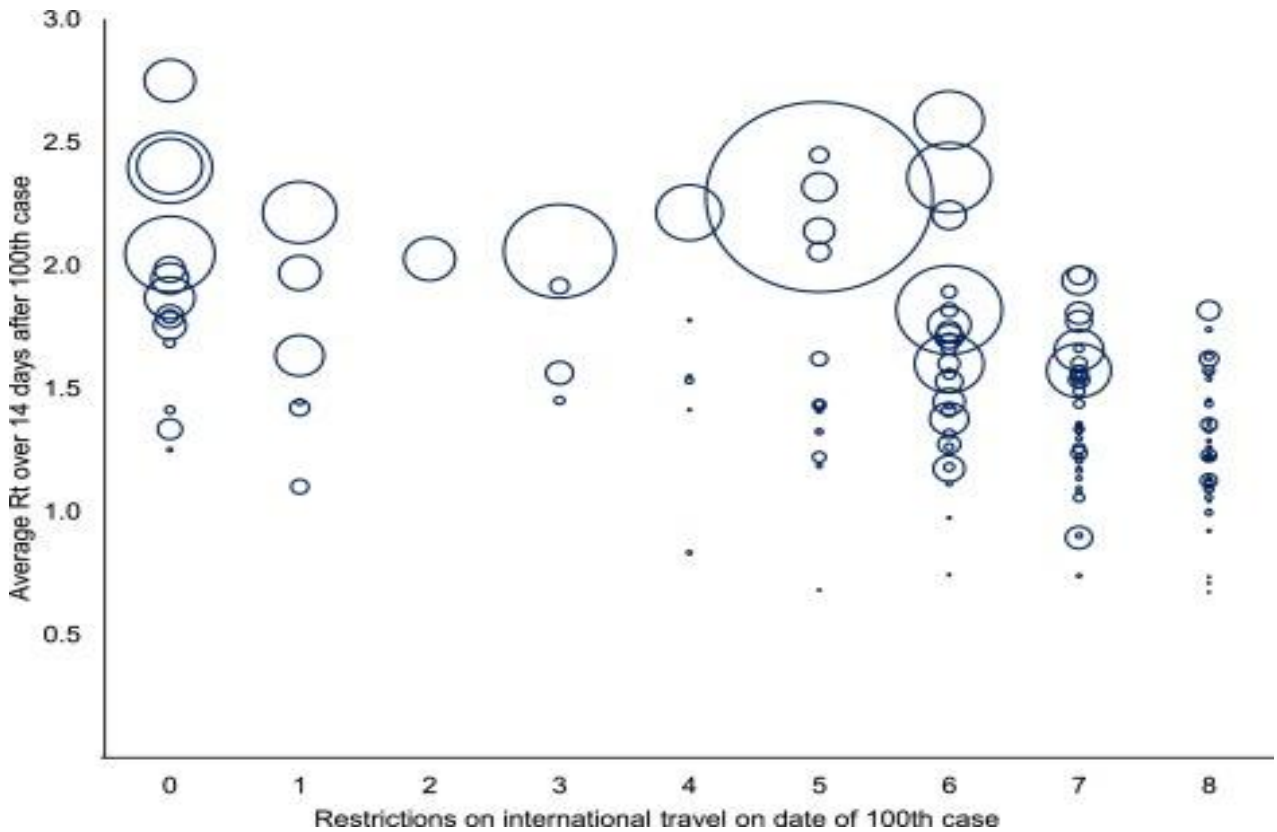


Figure 2 Restrictions on international travel on the date of the 100th case and average reproduction numbers in the following two weeks.

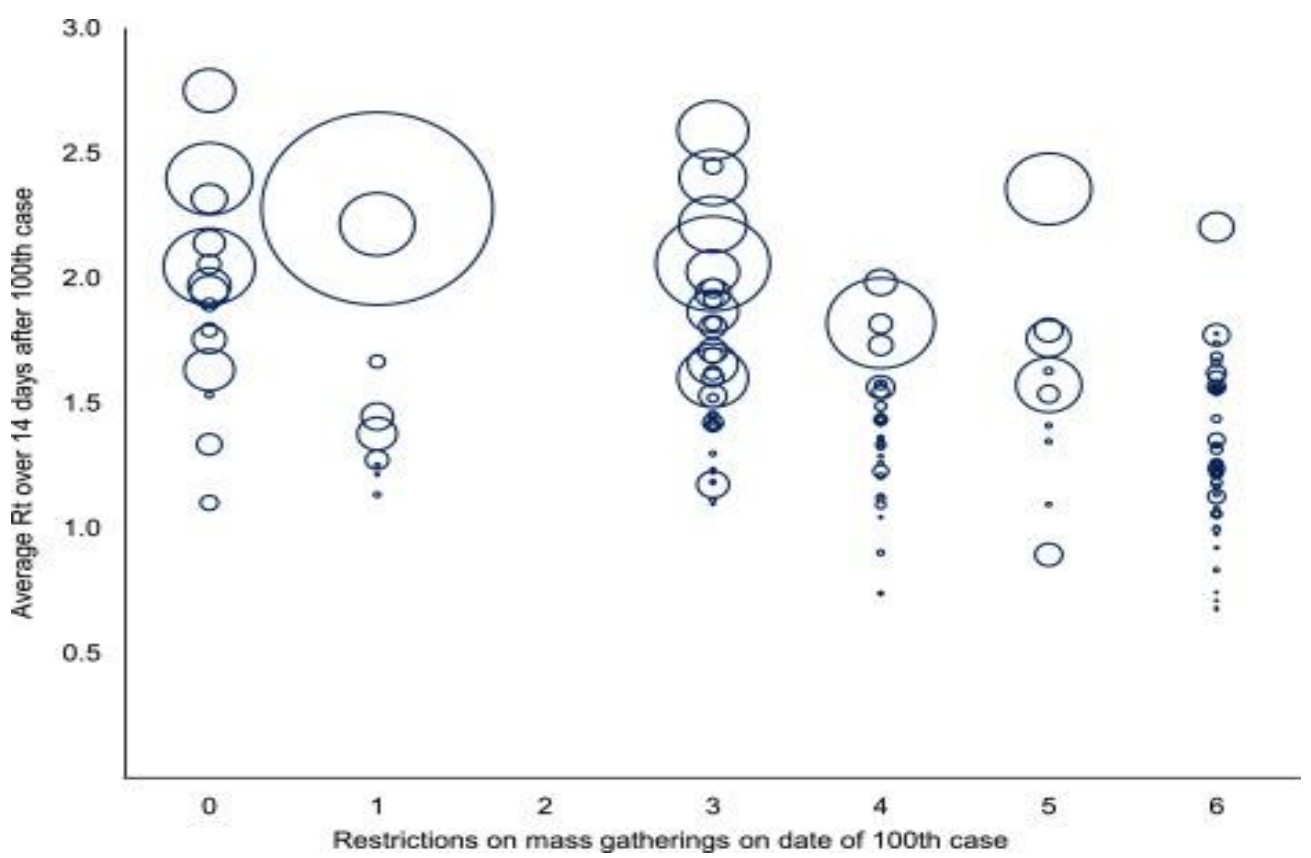


Figure 3 Restrictions on mass gatherings on the date of the 100th case and average reproduction numbers in the following two weeks.

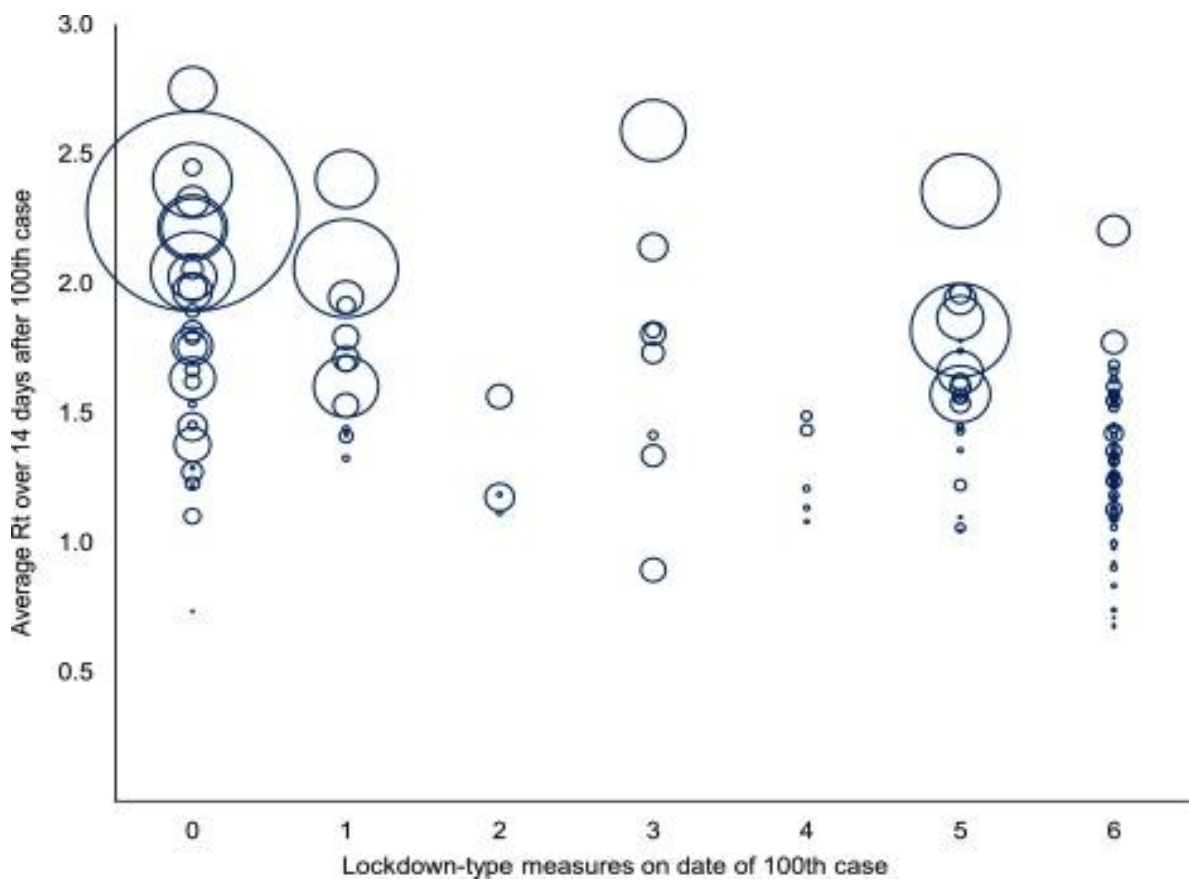


Figure 4 Lockdown-type measures on the date of the 100th case and average reproduction numbers in the following two weeks.

How many COVID-19 infections may have been prevented because of policies designed to slow the spread of the virus?

Large-scale emergency health measures prevented more than 500 million COVID-19 infections in six countries between January and early April 2020, according to a peer-reviewed article published in the journal *Nature*. The study authors looked at the impact of policies designed to slow the spread of the virus in six countries: the United States, China, South Korea, Italy, Iran, and France. They compared the growth rate of COVID-19 infections in each country before and after the policies — such as travel restrictions; business, school, and restaurant closures; and social distancing — were enacted.

DISCUSSION

The evidence of moderate certainty that current policies of at least 1 m physical distancing are probably associated with a large reduction in infection, and that distances of 2 m might be more effective. These data also suggest that wearing face masks protects people (both health-care workers and the general public) against infection by these coronaviruses, and that eye protection could confer additional benefit.

The outbreak of coronavirus was an unexpected phenomenon that has turned the whole world into lockdown, although most scientists and individuals blame the Chinese over the spread of the disease there has been significant downfalls from healthcare setups that has made this another pandemic. Several countries have been able to impose travel restrictions and work at home measures to reduce the reproduction rate and spread of the virus among communities but till date the number of tests being conducted globally are low. Patients who show symptoms are considered for testing whereas the silent carriers who do not express symptoms are not being tested [13]. The lack of test kits availability has led to several laboratories limiting their resources in order to identify the most vulnerable individuals to test on, this is a cost-effective practice carried out in several countries which could become a major issue if not addressed soon. PPE have been used widely by healthcare workers and staff to ensure the disease spread is limited within the hospital. The global demand of PPE has led to several healthcare workers being exposed to COVID-19 that has led to several deaths. The lack of awareness and preparedness by several healthcare sectors has led to further complications in dealing with COVID-19. Social distancing can also have its own implications where several countries economy has been dented significantly over the past few months and urgent need of money to get daily essentials have led people to panic buying which led to crowd gathering. Middle-low income countries such as India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have seen this mass crowd gatherings which could have impacted the spread of COVID-19. Another problem caused by social distancing is individuals being trapped indoors leading to be depressed and feeling lonely having a significant Preprints.

Hand hygiene is considered a remarkably important element of infection control. Previous studies have confirmed the effect hand-washing imposed on the prevalence of respiratory illness claiming that an appropriate hand-washing intervention could break the transmission cycle and reduce the risk between 6% and 44% . Although hand-washing is recommended as an inexpensive and widely available protective measure for both personal protection and epidemic prevention of some viral respiratory infections, like influenza and severe acute respiratory syndrome.

CONCLUSION

With the global cases of COVID-19 on the rise the need for testing kits and PPE for healthcare workers should become the highest priority for every country to limit and detect the disease early. Moreover, social and mental support needs to be given to people suffering from depression and loneliness during this period of isolation through online portals and communication lines to prevent mental health problems. Finally, it is our responsibility to stay aware of COVID-19 and report to health authorities if any symptoms and signs are present rather than hide it. Maintaining physical distancing and proper hygiene for a period of time will ensure that the spread of disease is lowered.

IMPORTANCES

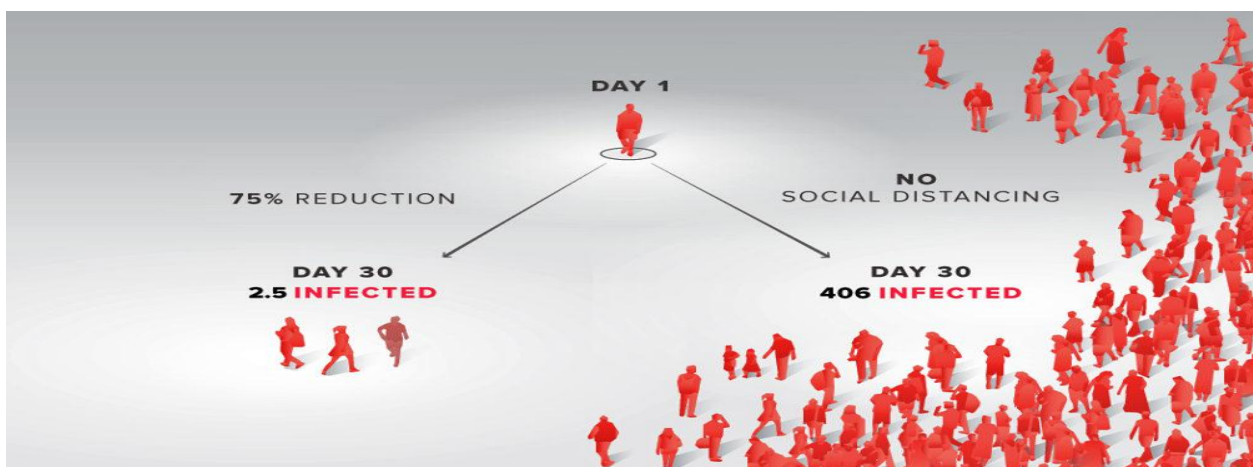
Why practice physical/social distancing and hygiene protocols during Covid-19

COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in close contact (within about 6 feet) for a prolonged period. Spread happens when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks, and droplets from their mouth or nose are launched into the air and land in the mouths or noses of people nearby. The droplets can also be inhaled into the lungs. Recent studies indicate that people who are infected but do not have symptoms likely also play a role in the spread of COVID-19. Since people can spread the virus before they know they are sick, it is important to stay at least 6 feet away from others when possible, even if they do not have any symptoms. Physical distancing is especially important for people who are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

If you are sick with COVID-19, have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, it is important to stay home and away from other people until it is safe to be around others.

COVID-19 can live for hours or days on a surface, depending on factors such as sunlight, humidity, and the type of surface. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes. However, this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. Physical distancing helps limit opportunities to come in contact with contaminated surfaces and infected people outside the home.

Although the risk of severe illness may be different for everyone, anyone can get and spread COVID-19. Everyone has a role to play in slowing the spread and protecting themselves, their family, and their community. In addition to practicing everyday steps to prevent COVID-19, keeping space between you and others is one of the best tools we have to avoid being exposed to this virus and slowing its spread in communities.



In the modern world interactions are done on regular basis using technology available but majority activities carried out on a daily basis relies on social interaction. Social interaction and contact is necessary as an economical perspective for the country as workers need to function on a regular basis to allow cash flow in their respective companies, it is also essential part of traders and consumers to generate income. Physical distancing practices allow individuals to maintain distances from each other for a period of time to ensure the spread of the disease is minimized. This would reduce the basic reproduction number (R0) of the virus which would minimize the disease spread. A study carried out by Prem and team of researchers identified that physical distancing practices were carried out properly an estimate of 92% of cases will be lowered by the end of 2020. An individual affected with COVID-19 has the ability to spread it to 2-3 people which will go on until they are distanced from each other. There are two common practices followed using physical distancing, one of them is physical distancing and maintaining a distance of nearly 1m within individuals and the other being staying indoors at home. This practice has been successful in the past and in the present as well where Wuhan was able to flatten the disease spread by following these practices.

Masks are a key measure to suppress transmission and save lives. Masks reduce potential exposure risk from an infected person whether they have symptoms or not. People wearing masks are protected from getting infected. Masks also prevent onward transmission when worn by a person who is infected. Masks helps physical distancing, avoiding crowded, closed and close-contact settings, improving ventilation, cleaning hands, covering sneezes and coughs, and more.

Widespread population vulnerability to COVID-19 infection, hand hygiene and face masks are repeatedly emphasized in the whole population. Regular and through hand-washing with soap or use of an alcohol-based rub are critical measures each of us can take to protect ourselves, each other and those who care for us: health workers.

Tips to follow-

When going out in public, it is important to stay at least 6 feet away from other people and wear a mask to slow the spread of COVID-19. Consider the following tips for practicing social distancing when you decide to go out.

Know Before You Go: Before going out, know and follow the guidance from local public health authorities where you live.

Prepare for Transportation: Consider social distancing options to travel safely when running errands or commuting to and from work, whether walking, bicycling, wheelchair rolling, or using public transit, rideshares, or taxis. When using public transit, try to keep at least 6 feet from other passengers or transit operators – for example, when you are waiting at a bus station or selecting seats on a bus or train. When using rideshares or taxis, avoid pooled rides where multiple passengers are picked up, and sit in the back seat in larger vehicles so you can remain at least 6 feet away from the driver. Follow these additional tips to protect yourself while using transportation.

Limit Contact When Running Errands: Only visit stores selling household essentials in person when you absolutely need to, and stay at least 6 feet away from others who are not from your household while shopping and in lines. If possible, use drive-thru, curbside pick-up, or delivery services to limit face-to-face contact with others. Maintain physical distance between yourself and delivery service providers during exchanges and wear a mask.

Choose Safe Social Activities: It is possible to stay socially connected with friends and family who don't live in your home by calling, using video chat, or staying

connected through social media. If meeting others in person (e.g., at small outdoor gatherings, yard or driveway gathering with a small group of friends or family members), stay at least 6 feet from others who are not from your household. Follow these steps to stay safe if you will be participating in personal and social activities outside of your home.

Keep Distance at Events and Gatherings: It is safest to avoid crowded places and gatherings where it may be difficult to stay at least 6 feet away from others who are not from your household. If you are in a crowded space, try to keep 6 feet of space between yourself and others at all times, and wear a mask. Masks are especially important in times when physical distancing is difficult. Pay attention to any physical guides, such as tape markings on floors or signs on walls, directing attendees to remain at least 6 feet apart from each other in lines or at other times. Allow other people 6 feet of space when you pass by them in both indoor and outdoor settings.

Stay Distanced While Being Active: Consider going for a walk, bike ride, or wheelchair roll in your neighborhood or in another safe location where you can maintain at least 6 feet of distance between yourself and other pedestrians and cyclists. If you decide to visit a nearby park, trail, or recreational facility, first check for closures or restrictions. If open, consider how many other people might be there and choose a location where it will be possible to keep at least 6 feet of space between yourself and other people who are not from your household.

Many people have personal circumstances or situations that present challenges with practicing social distancing to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Wash your hands often

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

It's especially important to wash:

- o Before eating or preparing food
- o Before touching your face
- o After using the restroom
- o After leaving a public place
- o After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- o After handling your mask
- o After changing a diaper
- o After caring for someone sick
- o After touching animals or pets

If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol**. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Avoid close contact

Inside your home: Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

- o If possible, maintain 6 feet between the person who is sick and other household members.

Outside your home: Put 6 feet of distance between yourself and people who don't live in your household.

- o Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread virus.

- o Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people.
- o Keeping distance from others is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.

Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when around others

You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick.

The mask is meant to protect other people in case you are infected.

Everyone should wear a mask in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.

Masks should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

Do NOT use a mask meant for a healthcare worker. Currently, surgical masks and N95 respirators are critical supplies that should be reserved for healthcare workers and other first responders.

Continue to keep about 6 feet between yourself and others. The mask is not a substitute for social distancing.

Cover coughs and sneezes

Always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow and do not spit.

Throw used tissues in the trash.

Immediately **wash your hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Clean and disinfect

Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.

If surfaces are dirty, clean them. Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.

Then, use a household disinfectant. Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants external icon will work.

Monitor Your Health Daily

Be alert for symptoms. Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of **COVID-19**.

- o Especially important if you are running essential errands, going into the office or workplace, and in settings where it may be difficult to keep a physical distance of 6 feet.

Take your temperature if symptoms develop.

- o Don't take your temperature within 30 minutes of exercising or after taking medications that could lower your temperature, like acetaminophen.

Follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop.

Use gloves when cleaning and disinfecting or providing care to someone who is sick

Wash your hands after you have removed the gloves.

Use disposable gloves when touching or having contact with blood, stool, or body fluids, such as saliva, mucus, vomit, and urine.

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