



Guest Editorial

Dentistry in Covid era

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The Covid-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on the dental health sector. Dental professionals now face a challenge they have not been prepared for. COVID-19 has affected the world in ways that none of us could have fathomed. No dental institute could have envisioned a situation like this one, where there is a prolonged period of interruption.

Direct contact, face-to-face communication, and constant exposure to body fluids such as blood and saliva are the major predisposing risk factors for us, along with probability of cross-infection.

Preliminary screening, tele-triaging and thermal screening, once entering a dental office should be part of the routine. A screening questionnaire including precise travel details and health history, is mandatory to verify any chances of positivity to COVID-19. A written informed consent and undertaking below each question are a requirement and should be over-emphasized to prevent hiding of facts since there is a considerable risk of undetected exposure to asymptomatic patients.

Due to the unique characteristics of dental procedures where a large number of droplets and aerosols are generated, the standard protective measures in daily clinical work are not enough to prevent the spread of COVID-19, especially when patients are in the incubation period, are unaware that they are infected, or choose to conceal their infection. Thus, we not only have the highest risk of contact with the

virus but also can reduce the spread by following proper preventive measures.

Various guidelines have been recommended on preventative measures for dental professionals to minimize transmission through contact and dental procedures which consist of numerous ways to minimize the chance exposure and guides on the proper usage of personnel protective equipment (PPE), actual hand hygiene techniques, etiquette for cough and respiratory hygiene, waste disposal, disinfection and cleaning of patient care equipment, and importantly training and education of the personnel.

One should emphasize on the usage of several personal protection measures and avoid or minimize operations that can produce droplets or aerosols. The use of saliva ejectors with a low volume or high volume can reduce the production of droplets and aerosols.

As we emerge on the other end of this pandemic, we should keep in mind, that it is not yet over. The key to a successful dental practice is to consider every patient as a suspected /confirmed 2019-nCoV case and follow all the standard protocols. Maintaining high levels of hygiene standards in a dental office and following infection prevention protocols are of utmost importance. The dental staff must be at the forefront of the control of cross-infections to protect the well-being and oral health of patients. It is imperative to make informed clinical decisions, create awareness among the public to avert panic while promoting the oral health and wellness of patients during these challenging times.

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With huge hopes that the dust soon settles over the ongoing rage of COVID-19 pandemic and the world is back to all its glory and amidst concerns of bringing back the normalcy, it is important to understand that there will be new 'normals.'

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