

Corona Virus: Myths and Epidemiological Considerations

Corona viral infection, Covid-19 is undoubtedly one of the mega events of this century. We don't know what else lies ahead in this century. Who knew in the beginning of 2020 that we were heading towards this sudden catastrophe that will take away so many lives! Covid-19 is a member of the corona family of Zoonotic viruses which are highly contagious. In the recent past they were first highlighted in Saudi Arabia in 2012 where these viruses were transmitted from camel to man resulting in serious pulmonary disease known as 'Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS)'. It has since then spread to several other countries, including the United States. Most people infected with MERS-CoV developed severe respiratory illness, fever, cough, and shortness of breath; many died.

Human beings are always subjected to wars, state terrorism, nuclear, chemical and biological warfare killing far more people than corona virus but that did not affect most of us in our cozy homes! We cared very little for the suffering human beings elsewhere as the flames of those calamities were not reaching us. This is the first time that all human beings on this planet of earth are equally scared and afraid of a deadly disease. Although the reported fatality rates for Covid-19 are less than 2% but who wants to be included in those 2%. Life is very precious and dear to everyone; as a result, big economic losses incurred all over the world, airplanes grounded, factories stopped, and schools deserted. Many doctors and other health workers also succumbed to the infection confirming highly contagious

One perplexing phenomenon was to witness marked geographical variations in terms of incidence of the disease and its fatalities. As coronavirus infection is highly contagious, one would have expected much higher rates in those thickly populated countries like Bangladesh where social distancing would be virtually impossible, but to our surprise the corona infection rate was very low and there were relatively fewer deaths. Similarly, there is a marked difference in incidence in neighboring France and Great Britain Germany.

In China, Wuhan province appeared to be the epicenter of the corona virus but then the rest of China is not that badly affected and as a matter of fact incidence per million population is quite low for entire China which is the world's most populous country. All

these markedly significant geographical variations had led to several questions.

Some of the questions are; What are the important factors conducive in acquiring and spreading corona viral infection other than close contacts. These factors could be genetic, social and environmental. Cleanliness and regular ablution before prayers as practiced in Muslim countries may explain their low incidence in these countries. Of course, no country is homogenous in terms of religious practices. Not only tribes and clans differ but also individuals differ. In the USA Blacks and Hispanics were most affected but no community or group was spared; Caucasians also succumbed to this virus.

Some believe that countries with high incidence of malaria and tuberculosis as well as high BCG vaccination rate are less prone to get COVID 19. BCG vaccination is often used in urinary bladder cancer treatment. Not only was the incidence being low but also severity.

Certain people have raised the issue of G5 technology for mobile phones. They claim that strong electromagnetic waves might damage the DNA of the exposed persons and make them more vulnerable to the Viral infection. They don't mean that the virus travels through electromagnetic waves, but they are suggesting a double hit theory as for example happens in cancer i.e. initiators and promoters.

No matter how weird these so-called conspiracy theories may appear, these need to be seriously and scientifically investigated. Their serious investigation rather than rebutting outright may highlight some preventable factors which may help us understand the pathogenesis of the disease and control its spread. To say that all conspiracy theories are false or there is no such thing as "conspiracy" is absolutely nonsense. Every criminal creates some conspiracy theory to conceal his crime. These conspiracies are created to hide the real criminal or real causes; on the other hand, when some serious investigator goes after these conspiracies and tries to dig out the reality, the former group label his findings as conspiracy theory. Media plays a crucial role in spreading false conspiracy theories and blaming the right conclusions as "conspiracy theories". Prime examples in recent history include USS Liberty ship, which was attacked by Israel, but Egypt was held responsible, however

after serious investigations the real culprit was identified, and Israel had no choice but to accept the responsibility and she did it. Similarly, experienced US pilots do not buy the theory (Conspiracy) that Muslims carried out 9/11, They clearly through scientific evidence prove that buildings were not brought down by airplanes hit. Another example was SARS virus infection disinformation by a Holland doctor who in order to sell his vaccines entered the WHO and even changed the definition of endemic and

pandemic. He was however caught and punished. In Holland Newspapers he is known as Dr. Flu.

In conclusion we must seriously and scientifically investigate all the factors helping or preventing viral spread and virus-related morbidity and mortality.

References:

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