Combating Coronavirus

A new variant of the coronavirus - the novel coronavirus (nCoV) has infected over hundreds of people and continues to infect hundreds more and has also resulted in many deaths.

By Dr Nanda Kumar Jairam

A recent viral epidemic resulting in a cluster of pneumonia cases in Wuhan city in Hubei province of China and its rapid spread shocked the whole world. It has raised serious concerns not only among Chinese medical authorities but health authorities and caregivers globally, including the World Health Organisation.

A new variant of the coronavirus - the novel coronavirus (nCoV) has infected over hundreds of people and continues to infect hundreds more and has also resulted in many deaths. It was initially believed that the nCoV is transmitted between animals only but now health authorities have confirmed that humans can also transmit the virus to one another. The nCoV is a species of virus that affects the respiratory tract, which can range from a minor cold to severe illnesses.

The ongoing infection is caused by a variant of the virus called novel CoV. Once the Chinese authorities confirmed that they had identified a new virus, it rang an alarm bell for the world. The new virus is a coronavirus, which is a family of viruses that include the common cold, and viruses such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). This new virus was temporarily named "2019-nCoV and the disease caused is COVID Corona virus Disease."
India has also geared up to combat the threat. First of all, Indians in Wuhan were promptly evacuated and post evacuation from Wuhan, they were quarantined for 14 days. As a preventive measure, the government also issued the guidelines for those in-charge of the camps, health professionals, travellers and their family members.

It is time to adhere to the WHO guidelines which emphasize early recognition and immediate isolation of the suspect. Standard precautions for people include hand and respiratory hygiene such as frequent washing of hands, wearing the mask, covering mouth and nose while coughing and sneezing.

It is proven that Coronavirus can be transmitted from person to person. Apart from coughing and sneezing the infection can spread even when someone touches a contaminated surface like a door handle. The virus mainly infects the upper respiratory and gastrointestinal tract of mammals and birds. Hence, it is important to avoid unprotected contact with live wild animals and birds.

Symptoms usually include Runny nose, Headache, Cough, Sore throat, High fever, Difficulty breathing, Pneumonia and Bronchitis

Treatment
As of now, there is no cure for this infection with a vaccine. Medical researchers continue to study the effects of previous coronavirus outbreaks and are working on a vaccine which has not been developed yet. So, prevention is the key. We need to provide supportive and symptomatic treatment to the patients. As preventive measures, we recommend avoiding crowded spaces and contact with people who are infected with flu or fever. Personal hygiene such as washing hands thoroughly and frequently can protect a person.

Those who are poorly immuno-compromised like, cancer patients, diabetics, elderly and sick persons are most vulnerable.
To prevent infection one should also cover his/her mouth when coughing or sneezing. Safe food practices can also prevent us from the infection. We need to avoid the consumption of raw or undercooked animal products. Under good food safety practices, it is recommended that one should handle milk, raw meat or animal organs with care to avoid cross-contamination with uncooked foods.

As on date there are 3 confirmed cases reported in India, with no deaths. The governments, health authorities and caregivers need to be on high alert. The Indian Health Ministry has begun screening procedures at all international airports especially for passengers coming in from affected areas. It is time to be alert and take all preventive measures. India, being a densely populated country, would have to make extra efforts and all healthcare stakeholders need to come together for combating the greatest threat by a novel virus.

The author is the Chairman, CEO and GMD at Columbia Asia hospitals, NATHEALTH Industry Leader.

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Coronavirus Outbreak Highlights: PM Modi says no need to panic as new cases emerge in country, Navy cancels ‘Milan 2020’ exercise

By: FE Online | Updated Mar 03, 2020 11:12:47 pm

Coronavirus in India: A private school in Noida has postponed exams and fumigated its premises after the father of a student tested positive for coronavirus, officials said.

Coronavirus Outbreak Highlights: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday tweeted that he reviewed the situation of coronavirus and the preparedness of India to deal with the global pandemic, assuring citizens that there was no reason to panic. His tweet came a day after two cases of novel Coronavirus emerged in India. A Delhi-based man, who had recently returned from Italy, tested positive for COVID-19, while a man in Hyderabad was also found to have contracted the disease after he had gone to Dubai where he worked with his colleagues from Hong Kong. Apart from that, an Italian tourist in Jaipur was found to be infected by the virus on Monday.
On Tuesday, Hyatt Regency asked its staff to self-quarantine after a coronavirus-infected man had dined at the hotel restaurant on February 28. It told all staffers who were present in the restaurant on that day to quarantine themselves for 14 days. Apart from this, the hotel will also conduct daily temperature checks for all staffers and contractors upon entering and exiting the hotel, ANI reported the hotel administration as saying.

The Union Government also suspended all regular visas and e-visas, including visa on arrival, issued till March 3 for Italian, Iranian, South Korean and Japanese nationals who have not entered India yet.

Meanwhile, two schools in Noida have been shut for the next few days as one of the students is the child of the Delhi-based man who was tested positive for coronavirus. The exams in one of the schools have also been postponed and the premises have been fumigated.

Financial Express Online brings you latest updates on coronavirus. Stay tuned.

**Coronavirus Latest Update: US Federal Reserve cuts interest rates**

In response to growing economic risk due to Coronavirus outbreak, the US Federal Reserve on Tuesday implemented an emergency rate cut. In a unanimous decision, the Fed’s policy-setting committee cut its key interest rate by a half point to a range of 1.0-1.25, AFP reported.

**Coronavirus Latest Update: NATHEALTH calls for unified response**

NATHEALTH, the apex healthcare industry body, has called for a unified response to deal with the impact of Coronavirus after six fresh cases were reported on Tuesday. The government has taken a number of measures to reduce cascading effects of coronavirus impact on human lives, the body said in a statement.

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NATHEALTH calls for unified response to arrest coronavirus impact

Press Trust of India  |  New Delhi
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The government has initiated a number of critical measures and built up necessary reserves based on planned contingencies for critical medical supplies to reduce cascading effects of coronavirus impact on human lives, it said in a statement.

"Private sector players will be happy to collaborate with the government to augment the diagnostics/treatment capacity as was done in 2009 when H1N1 had started spreading incessantly," NATHEALTH President H Sudarshan Ballal said.

Though the disease is more infectious than the regular flu, it seems less fatal than some of the other epidemics the country has faced, he added.

NATHEALTH has also asked the government to include the private sector in contingency planning to potential scenarios at both central and state levels in India.
It also asked the government to consider creating a strategic pool of private sector hospitals, diagnostic labs, protective equipment supply, medicines and frontline workers and to demarcate their roles in different contingency scenarios.

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