

Misconceptions in Indian People about Covid 19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT -

According to WHO pandemic is a occurrence in community a illness or health issues or symptoms clearly in excess of normalexpectancy. Covid 19 has involved whole globe, affected all countries and their states.So WHO declared it as a global health emergency . To hasten the spread of Covid 19 , all countries declared complete closure of public places and forced the people to close themselves inside their home. In India most of the population around 60% population reside in rural areas and most of them are illiterate. This high illiteracy ratio also tell about the capability of people to understand the situation of emergency . Because of unawareness about infections, it was difficult for these people to understand the course of spread of Covid 19 and required precautions for protection from diseases .Because of low knowledge about these disease, people started believing on myths and false information . Some myths raised fear in peoples about disease and pandemics . When disease was new even WHO was unaware about Covid 19. people started spreading false rumors about protection from disease and some of the businesses made profit from this. Media was also responsible for spreading wrong information about disease. This made people scared and also affected their social life .It is said that less knowledge is dangerous.People know very less about Covid 19.All informationthey have is from social media which was misleading . In India people believe more on what's app forwards than physician which was the biggest reason for these myths about Covid 19

Keywords – Myths , Covid 19, Pandemic ,Protection ,Precautions ,WHO

INTRODUCTION –

India has faced many pandemics (1) in past like Encephalitis lethargica 1915 -1926 , Spanish flu in 1918-1920 this was caused by deadly virus influenza and the soldiers in world war 1 were carrier of this disease and spread it all over the India. Cholera pandemic in 1961 -1975 poor water sanitation practices in Kolkata was the epicentre for the spread of disease in India. Small pox in 1974 ,60% cases were reported in India and this was more virulent than other countries . plague in 1994 . SRAS in 2002-2004 it was similar to Covid 19 and was caused by virus strain SRAS Cov . Chikungunya and dengue in 2006 . Hepatitis outbreak in Gujarat in year 2009 ,but Covid 19 was more sever and dangerous than all these pandemics .Outbreak of corona virus began in December 2019. Corona virus was first detected in Wuhan city of China. WHO announced it as a global health emergency and declaredCovid 19 a pandemic in march of 2020 . The corona virus genetic makeup is similar to the virus found in animal (2) so it was believed that corona is spread by bat born virus . The virus spreads from person to person mostly by droplet infection that is it is spread via air born droplets . The virus mainly affects respiratory tract of mammals including humans. symptoms of COVID-19 includes cough, fever and Serious condition it can lead to pneumonia, kidney failure and even death. The virus has spread globally causing a huge number of deaths. To stop the spread of the

virus, a strict lockdown all over the world was declared in March 2020. This lockdown in turn affected the economy of all the countries severely.

Some of the following myths has made huge impact on Indian population

- 1 Ayurveda and home remedies can cure / prevent the Covid 19
- 2 Vitamin c helps cure the infection
- 3 Only old people are affected by Covid 19
- 4 Eating garlic will prevent the infection
- 5 Onset of summers mean increase in temperature can decline of the virus load and infection rate can be decline
- 6 hot water bath or drinking warm water can prevent from getting viral infection.
- 7 Eating meat can cause Covid 19
- 8 If you are able to hold breath for 10 sec that means you are not infected by virus and you are healthy
- 9 Dogs can cause Covid 19
- 10 Application of alcohol and other disinfectant can protect from Covid infection also their consumption can protect from infection
- 11 Regarding the vaccine for Covid 19 people also spread some rumours

METHOD AND MATERIALS –

Data was obtained from following authors articles and studies. Search on Google scholar included ‘myths about covid 19 , peoples perspective about pandemic , measures for prevention from covid 19 pandemic , social stigma about infection ‘ conducted a review and collected the article for the same and arranged in given manner . references for the same are given below .

Also the interview was conducted for views of people from various status about pandemic

Example –

Questions asked to graduate students and some illiterates from nearby village

- 1 what precautions you take for protection from covid 19 ?
- 2 what kind of information you received about covid 19 ?
- 3 what do you know about pandemic
- 4 is it affected your daily life routine
- 5 what changes you did in your lifestyle
- 6 did you believe on what’s app forwards

Social media forwards are read and collected which was very popular .

The Indian government announced the lockdown on 24th march and then extended to 3rd may .this included complete lockdown of all the places where mass gathering of people is possible .this complete lockdown has impacted all the peoples of various age groups and various professions

Ayurveda is a form of natural medicine system originated in India around 3000 years ago . in India there is certified Ayurveda practitioners who gives treatment for various diseases .Ayurveda includes medicinal herbs and various metals which is very easily available in India and meditation, yoga , massage therapy .Ayurveda treatment includes internal purification of body ,regular practice of yoga, meditation, massage therapy, naturopathy ,panchakarma and various other process . in the India , Ayurveda is considered as equal to allopathy that is western medicine ,naturopathy and homeopathy . practitioner of Ayurveda in India undergo staterecognized , institutional training for practicing Ayurveda .this easy availability and less knowledge about Ayurveda common population misuse it . same is happened with covid 19 some people believe that medicinal herbs can cure the covid 19 but this was only myth because there is no such studies did which can confirm this(3) . no scientific evidence available for this . ‘ ayurvedic medicines can treat and prevent the coronavirus ‘ this has started when the ministry of Ayurveda , Yoga and Naturopathy ,Unani , Siddha and Homeopathy (AYUSH)(4) said that some ayurvedic medications can help to prevent and treat the corona virus infection . however ,there is no scientific studies or evidences that prove this ,so far . AYUSH is formed in india for developing education , research and spread of ancient Indian culture of medicine system in India.this is headed by state ministry so it is government system says about use of ayurveda in covid 19 prevention this made easy for people to believe on myths about it . some of the herbal medicine companies claim that their product can protect the people from infection which was complete marketing strategy help them to fool the poor peoples . some of the myths I heard are ‘ drinking turmeric milk can protect from covid infection , herbalkadha is protective against infection ‘ these things has no scientific basis . some of the substances used in ayurvedic medicine are natural plants and metals, and these substances if used without the advice of a trained practitioner can be harmful or have adverse effect on health .ayurvedic medicines act as dietary supplements rather than as drugs in India , so they are not require to maintain the standards as conventional medication and so they dose not undergo any trials before its marketing . It is important to ask about any ayurvedic medicationsbefore using it for treatment of any disease .it is important to confirm the diagnosis of a disease and then take medication under physicians advice.

As every one says good immune system can protect from any infections ,people all over the world started boosting their immunity by any means.(5) For immunity people started exercising , eating properly like having nutritious food ,also some of educated persons believe in medications for rising their immunity .vitamin supplements like vitamin B complex ,vita D ,vita C etc . vitamin c was some what effective in SARS infection so it was used by some medical professionals in treatment of covid 19 ,so this gave rise of myth that vitamin c can protect them from covid 19 ,but no such evidence that it help to protect against covid 19. As vitamin c in immune cells is higher than plasma so this shows the functional role of vitamin c in these immune cells. This raises the use of vitamin c. according to studies , during this pandemic period use of vitamin c increase, this can end in hypervitaminosis c with symptoms like renal stones , diarrhea, nausea and vomiting , rebound scurvy, hemolysis and bleeding , and dental decalcification ,increased estrogen levels in blood , rectal bleeding .this can happen in many people because increased use of vitamin c and less knowledge about this side effects, which cause this miss use of vitamin c. the fact is scientists are still researching about whether multivitamins are effective in preventing covid and its treatment. some studies suggest multivitamin protect from early death. Others show they have no benefit in early deaths . either way , food is always the best for needed nutrients . its myth that all supplements are safe for

health and can be taken by any one and anytime because they are natural , but in reality any substance that has the potential to treat also has the potential to be harmful. Even nutrients and supplements come from nature, but when manufacturers process these substance into pill- form nature, they become unnatural . this process of making pills adds some chemicals and that's why they can be harmful if used in huge quantity , if substance is natural doesn't necessarily mean it is safe .

During start of infection it was believed that only old peoples are getting infected,(6) because of less data about characteristics of this infection it was difficult to predict about which age group is getting affected. As the old peoples have low immunity status this can be the reason for increase ratio of infection among older peoples. Also most of older peoples are suffering from co morbidities like hypertension, diabetes, asthma etc which can be the reason for high risk of getting infection and it is more dangerous in them . injury, noncommunicable diseases ,low socio economic status ,poor sanitation , social isolation and exclusion , poor availability of health care service, mental health problems, maltreatment these are the some risk factors which make them more prone to covid infection .

In India because of practice of ayurveda and high use of home remedies people thinks they can treat any kind of disease and infection, same has happened in case of covid infection ,due to peoples belief on home remedies they also started practicing all kind of remedies for protection from covid 19 ,use of garlic is also one of them(7) ,eating raw garlic or having it with sabji is increase. Because of medicinal properties of garlic and antimicrobial function , people have this misconception that it can help to prevent and treat the covid 19 infection. However , there is no such evidence that eating garlic can prevent getting infection or help in its treatment .

As some of the trials did for using hydroxychloroquine for treatment of covid . but studies show hydroxychloroquine dose not have any use in treating covid. Drug dose no decrease the rate of deaths incovid 19 patients ,(8) also not in people with moderate disease . it is not indicated for treatingcovid 19 infection and it has some side effects like nausea vomiting ,abdominal discomfort ,abdominal pain so it should not used without physician prescription.

People think wearing mask will protect them from getting infection many people use cotton cloths mask which are very thin some people use dirty masks and people are not aware about how to apply it and dispose it , healthcare staff use masks which are of high quality and specific for protecting from covid 19 virus also these are perfectly fitting masks for them .(9) cloth masks can protect against some droplets but virus in air in the form of aerosol can still infect . all people should wear masks in public places where it is impossible to maintain social distancing that is distance of 6 feet . even if you arewearing a mask , it is necessary to follow other precautions , like not touching the nose and mask , social distancing , and washing the hands . Surgical mask and N95 respirators are specific for these infection and provide greatest protection . people should not wear mask while physical activity like running ,cycling ,gym , as it is difficult to breathe through masks while exercising (10) during exercising Sweat make the mask wet quickly which makes it difficult to breathe through wet mask and wet mask is good surface for growth of micro-organisms. So it is important to keep distance from others while exercise distance of at least 1 meter is sufficient to protect from covid infection . it was misconception that the prolonged use of medical masks can cause oxygen deficiency , longer use of mask can be uncomfortable. But it dose not cause o2 deficiency and also dose not cause any cO2 toxicity .during wearing a mask , make sure it properly covers nose and mouth and that it is

not much tight that it cause suffocation it should allow normal breathing . do not re use a damp mask and always change as it gets wet or dirty follow proper method to dispose it off do not throw it anywhere .

This was the myth that you have to be in contact with someone for 10 min to get the viral infection, as long as person is in contact with infected person has chance of getting infection . the virus can transmit from person to person in under 10 min .also it was said that the cloths of a infected person or any surface or a material in contact with infected person can transmit the virus but no such evidence is there that proves cloths can transmit the virus, following proper protective guidelines at work and cleaning and disinfecting clothes properly is required for preventing disease transmission . the rate of shoes spreading covid 19 infection is very low ,as a precaution , in homes where small children play on floors, leave shoes out of home and also do frequent cleaning of floor with disinfectant . This will reduce the chance of spreading infection(11)

During starting period when infection was new people believes that everyone with covid 19 dies ,but this is false . the fatality rate for covid 19 is very less among the people who are getting infection . WHO reported that 80%of the people with covid 19 infection do not need any hospitalization it can be treated at home with proper isolation and some medications. mild symptoms of covid 19 which are not reason for worry are fever , cough , sore throat , fatigue , and breathlessness . also many people with the covid 19 infection do not show any symptoms.

Animals and pets can spread the coronavirus , some of the country reported pets and animals developed covid 19 infection . in most of the cases , the pets become infected after the contact of people who had covid 19 infection . according to the (cdc)there is no evidence that animals can transmit the infection or get infected by covid 19 . scientists are still studying about role of animals in these infection . because of this reason many pets are suffered people fear to keep dog in their home and other pets many cases of deaths and missing are recorded during this period of pandemic .(12)

Washing the nose with saline protect from the coronavirus but there is no such studies show that saline wash of nose can protect from any respiratory infections. Some research suggest that rinsing the nose can help to give some relief of upper respiratory tract infections, but scientists have not found any evidence that it can protect infection or treatment of covid 19 saline is use for treating common cold . regularly washing of the nose has no effect in preventing respiratory infection. And some people believes that drinking alcohol can kill the virus and protect them from infection . but alcohol itself cause harmful side effects on health . also spraying bleach on your body surface will protect you against covid 19 but it can be harmful and there is no such evidence that applying disinfectant on body can protect from covid virus , do not apply alcohol chlorine or any other disinfectant on body surface because these are irritants and can cause dermatitis or any other dangerous reaction on skin also its injection can lead to death due to oral burns and git burn .(13) also it is believed that drinking ethanol and other chemical disinfectant can reduce the chance of infection but this is not true it is dangerous to drink such disinfectants can cause mouth and throat burns.

Also during initial days of infection it was said that infection in spread by eating meat .also who supported this statement. Some people believed that it is spread by eating sea food , pigs and bat

,also there was myth that it was spread because of eating bats , but there is no such evidence that infection is spread by eating meat.

It was said that hot temperature kill the virus so during summer infection will end .you can getcovid 19 infection no matter how hot the weather is , raise in temperature has no effect on covid 19 virus it does not protect from getting infection . countries with hot weather have reported cases of covid 19 . also hot bath kill virus ,scientist still working on the analysis of effect of hot weather on the covid 19 .Many authors have reported studies on myths and misconceptions about COVID-19 (14-16). Toshida et. al. reported about rumors and facts in media about COVID-19(17). Gaidhane et. al. on effect of electronic media on diet, exercise, and sexual activity among adolescents (18).A number of related studies were reported from India. Bakshi et. al. reported psychosocial effects of Covid-19 pandemic on health care professionals and medical students (19). Kaple et. al. reported on social aspects and safe behaviors in Covid-19 (20). Similar studies were also reported by Nanotkar et. al (21), Shrivastava et. al. (22), Budhrani et. al. (23).

CONCLUSION –

Due to less knowledge about the covid 19 virus people made many theories of own for protection from it . also there was no proper guidelines for treatment of it lead to misunderstanding for many peoples . those who believe on social sites information and illiterate people were effected more . also some of the businesses gain their profit by raising fear in people .also people started practicing some harmful measures which was not even protecting them from covid but also harmful for their health. To increase knowledge and educating people about covid 19 pandemic government should take some proper measures also people should be more aware and they should be responsible so that they wont spread such myths .

Various myths stated above has effected many people in various ways some of these are dangerous for the health of people and also was the reason for the fear about this pandemic but proper way of educating people about covid 19 was helpful to reduce this fear .

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